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Opposition blasts Lebanon media law

ANTELIAS, Lebanon (R) — About 2,500 Lebanese protesters took part in a weekend gathering near Beirut to protest a government decision to ban dozens of private television and radio stations. Citizens, media workers, unionists, parliamentary deputies and political party representatives took part in the meeting held on Saturday and Sunday at a convent in the coastal town of Antelias, 10 kilometres north of Beirut. They demanded the cancellation of a new law under which the government ordered dozens of Lebanon's many private radio and television stations to close by Nov. 30 and licensed only a handful of stations mostly owned by officials. Live performance of local popular singers and musicians attracted hundreds of Lebanese families to the gathering where they signed a huge petition "vowing to defend rights and liberties in Lebanon."

Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published by the Jordan Press Foundation
جوردان تايمز يومية مستقلة تصدر بالانجليزية عن المؤسسة الصحفية الاردنية "الرأي"



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King meets Maronite bishops

AMMAN (Petra) — His Majesty King Hussein Sunday received at the Royal Court Bishop Rolan Abu Joudh, deputy head of the Maronite church and Maronite bishop in Jordan and the Holy Lands. Boulos Sayyah who conveyed to the King a message from Patriarch Nasrallah Sfeir. The message contained Patriarch Sfeir's greetings to the King and appreciation of his efforts to support the Lebanese. Attending the audience were Prime Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti and His Royal Highness Prince Hamzeh Ben Al Hussein.

Envoy sworn in

AMMAN (Petra) — The newly-appointed ambassador at foreign ministry Omayyah Touqan was on Sunday sworn in before His Majesty King Hussein at the Royal Court as Jordan's ambassador to Belgium.

Mubarak, Assad to discuss Mideast peace

CAIRO (AFP) — Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak and his Syrian counterpart Hafez Al Assad are expected to meet soon to discuss the latest developments in the Middle East peace process, the Egyptian news agency MENA reported Sunday. MENA, in a dispatch from Damascus quoting diplomatic sources, said the meeting could take place after the G-15 summit of developing nations which is currently taking place in Harare. Mr. Mubarak is attending the summit. It did not say where the Mubarak-Assad meeting would take place. MENA said the talks would cover recent visits to the Middle East by French President Jacques Chirac and Russian Foreign Minister Yevgeny Primakov.

Saudi executed

RIYADH (AFP) — A Saudi man convicted of murder was beheaded by sword on Sunday in the western city of Jeddah, the Saudi Interior Ministry said. Mahmoud Ben Mohammed Ben Ahmad was convicted of murdering another man during an argument, it said in a statement read out on official radio. The execution was the 45th carried out since the beginning of the year in Saudi Arabia.

British firms broke Libya embargo report

LONDON (AFP) — British companies, including a subsidiary of the electronics giant Philips, supplied millions of dollars worth of equipment to the Libyan Defence Ministry in violation of international sanctions, the Sunday Times reported. Quoting engineers involved in the project, worth 32 million pounds (\$5 million), the newspaper said the Department of Trade and Industry and Customs were "misled" into believing that radio communications equipment and other material sent from British ports to Tripoli were for "maritime safety." In fact, the paper said, the project was commissioned by Libya's armed forces to update the communications systems between land military bases and Libyan warships. A spokesman for Philips, the Dutch group whose subsidiary in Cambridge, eastern England, was involved in the contract, admitted that the material was exported to the Libyan armed forces and could have had a military application. But he said: "If it was used for military purposes, Philips has been misled."

Primakov ends visit saying Arabs want greater Russian role

By P.V.Vivekanand
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

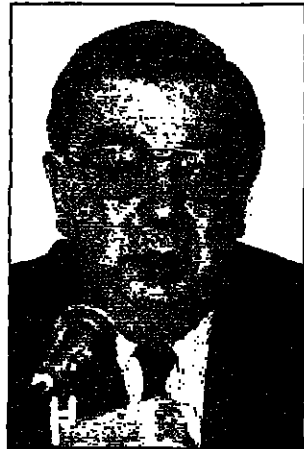
AMMAN — Russian Foreign Minister Yevgeny Primakov on Sunday ended a Middle East visit after describing a defusing of Israeli-Syrian tension as one of the major achievements of his swing through the region and saying the Arabs wanted a stronger Russian role in the Mideast peacemaking.

The Russian minister also told a press conference that the full potential of Jordanian-Russian economic relations was not being realised. He emphasised the role of "joint institutions" in strengthening bilateral relations.

Mr. Primakov, whose country co-sponsors the Middle East peace process along with the U.S., reiterated that Moscow was not trying to compete with Washington in Arab-Israeli peacemaking. "Russia would resume its traditional role in the Middle East so as to guarantee equilibrium and stability," but "we don't want to tread on anyone else's line."

The Russian foreign minister, who visited Syria, Lebanon, Egypt, Israel and the Palestinian territories arrived here on Friday, said he had Syrian and Israeli assurances that they did not want an armed conflict. "Both Syria and Israel suspected that the other planned a military strike," Mr. Primakov told reporters. He said that he had passed on "Syrian assurances that it plans no military attack against Israel..." in his meeting in Israel.

In response, Israeli Prime Minister (Benjamin Netanyahu) and Foreign Minister (David Levy) said Israel did not plan any military operations either on the Syrian or on the



Yevgeny Primakov

Lebanese borders," he said. The Russian minister said Moscow would continue its efforts to resume the stalled peace negotiations between Syria and Israel, but he did not explain how exactly the goal could be achieved, given the conflicting positions adopted by the two sides.

However, he said, Moscow was following a two-pronged approach. One prong, he said, was the immediate and "simultaneous resumption of peace negotiations on all tracks" and other was ensuring Israel's respect for all agreements agreed by its previous governments.

While he did not spell out how his proposals were received in the Middle East, Mr. Primakov said that he found that the Arabs wanted a stronger Russian involvement in the peace process of counterbalance the dominance to the U.S.

"All the Arab countries I have visited have insisted on a more active role for Russia in the Middle East peace process, as a super-power, permanent member of the U.N. Security Council, and co-sponsor of the peace process," he said.

Mr. Primakov said his country did not agree with Israel's approach to the Middle East peace process

and emphasised that the Jewish state should respect the land-for-peace formula as the basis for peace agreements with the Arabs as agreed at the 1991 Madrid conference.

"We emphasise that Israel should implement all agreements it has signed with the Arab parties" involved in the peace process, he said.

"Self-rule (for Palestinians) is not the last station where the peace wagon should stop," he said and reiterated Moscow's support for "the right of the Palestinian people to set an independent state" in the West Bank and Gaza. He expressed hope that the "shape of the (future) Palestinian state will be acceptable to all parties."

On the bilateral front, Mr. Primakov said there was a lot of room for Jordan and Russia to strengthen cooperation in various spheres but that joint institutions could play a large role in consolidating relations.

He described his talks with His Majesty King Hussein, His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan and Prime Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti as highly successful and that Jordan and Russia shared same views on most issues discussed.

King Hussein met Mr. Primakov over dinner Saturday at Aqaba.

During the meeting the King reiterated Jordan's commitment to achieving just, durable and comprehensive peace in the Middle East.

Crown Prince Hassan met with Mr. Primakov earlier in the day and discussed with him the Middle East peace process as well as the multilateral discussions on regional issues such as economic cooperation, the fate of Palestinian refugees, arms control, water-sharing and the environment.

Israel sends message to Syria through Britain over tensions

TEL AVIV (Agencies) — Israel asked British Foreign Secretary Malcolm Rifkind on Sunday to transmit a message to Syria warning against provocative statements and actions near the two countries' border, officials said.

Meeting the British diplomat at the start of his one-day visit to Israel, Foreign Minister David Levy asked Mr. Rifkind to help ease tensions between Israel and Syria linked to a nine-month freeze in bilateral peace talks and a series of recent troop manoeuvres on both sides of the border, the officials said.

Mr. Rifkind is due to meet in London Thursday with Syrian Foreign Minister Farouk Al Sharaa and Mr. Levy asked him to pass a message to him asking Damascus to avoid "irritating operations" along the border and to refrain from making "provocative statements," an Israeli official said.

Mr. Levy also reiterated Israel's desire to resume peace talks which have been frozen since February. A British spokesman said Mr. Rifkind agreed to act as intermediary and said he would speak again with Mr. Levy by telephone before Mr. Sharaa's London visit.

Last week Israel used another foreign minister, Russia's Yevgeny Primakov, to exchange reassuring messages with the Syrian leadership in a bid to prevent bilateral tensions from degenerating into armed conflict.

But on Sunday the official Syrian press continued to report speculation that Israel could be preparing to launch a "limited war" to torpedo any chances for a resumption of peace negotiations based on the land-for-peace principle.

"It is true that nothing can be ruled out," the daily Tishrin reported, warning that "Syria would not sit with its arms crossed" if such an attack took place.

Former Soviet Jewish dissident Natan Sharansky, now Israel's minister of trade and industry, urged the government to prepare the public for war with Syria in an interview published Sunday.

"In light of the Syrian threats, and they are very serious in my opinion, the best way is to begin preparing the people for the possibility of war," Mr. Sharansky told Israel's daily Haaretz in an interview.

"Instead of all the time saying that it is not serious — and I'm not saying that the

government says that — we have to have a public information campaign, discussions in the schools," he said.

Later on Sunday, in a news conference at Israel's border with Lebanon, Defence Minister Yitzhak Mordechai reiterated Israel would remain prepared but hoped for calm.

"We have an interest in calm. We have no aims across the border. We are taking preparedness and alertness steps. I appeal to (Syrian President Hafez Al) Assad and the Syrians to return to the negotiating table," Mr. Mordechai said.

Mr. Sharansky, whose new Yisrael Ba-Aliya Party garnered seven seats in Israel's 120-seat parliament in Israel's May elections, admitted he was not well-versed in Middle East culture but said life in the Soviet Union helped him to understand Syria.

"I do not know the Arab mentality," Mr. Sharansky said. "But I know the totalitarian regime well. Its stability is conditioned on the existence of enemies. Therefore they have to threaten and if someone is weak they go further. That's how it was in Russia."



JEWISH TERROR: Mohammad Dana (left) hugs his little sister Bara'ah inside their home in Hebron which witnesses said was destroyed Saturday night by petrol bombs thrown by Jewish settlers from nearby settlement of Kiryat Arba. Five people were injured in the fire including the children's father (see story on page 2)

Weizman due here Wednesday

By P.V.Vivekanand
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Israeli President Ezer Weizman is due here on Wednesday in his first trip to the Kingdom in response to an invitation from His Majesty King Hussein, Jordanian and Israeli officials said Sunday.

The visit will also be the first by a senior Israeli official following a strain in Jordanian-Israeli relations in the wake of Amman's criticism of unilateral Israeli actions in Arab East Jerusalem in September and the Kingdom's demand that the government of right-wing Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu honour all agreements his predecessors signed with the Palestinians.

Given the largely ceremonial status of the Israeli president, Mr. Weizman's visit to Jordan does not have much political bearing. However, officials from both sides said they expected the King and President Weizman to discuss the peace process as well as bilateral ties with a view to removing the irritants in the relationship.

According to a Jordanian official, "President Weizman always had a standing invitation to visit Jordan after the signing of the peace treaty" between the two countries in October 1994.

The invitation was renewed last month during a telephone conversation between King Hussein and President Weizman.

The visit was expected to take place shortly thereafter but was deferred so as not to have an impact on the ongoing Palestinian-Israeli negotiations on an Israeli deployment in the West Bank town of Hebron, according to reports in the Israeli press.

Israeli embassy spokesman Shalom Touregman told the Jordan Times on Sunday that one of the objectives of the visit was to "remove the tension in the relations between the two countries."

The two leaders "will also discuss the peace process" and related issues.

(Continued on page 7)

Arafat confirms bid to have Hebron deal signed in Cairo

GAZA CITY (Agencies) — Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat confirmed Sunday that efforts were underway to organise a formal signing ceremony to seal agreement on Israel's troop withdrawal from Hebron during a regional economic conference next week in Cairo.

But he added that negotiations on the transfer of power in Hebron to his self-rule government were continuing and still faced substantial obstacles.

U.S. officials who have been mediating the Hebron negotiations said over the weekend that both sides were close to resolving their final differences over the redeployment, which has been held up by Israeli demands for improved security guarantees for the 420 Jewish settlers living in the city of 120,000.

Musa: No signing during conference

EGYPTIAN FOREIGN Minister Amr Musa on Sunday ruled out the signing of an Israeli-Palestinian accord on Hebron during the regional economic conference in Cairo on Nov. 12-14. "There are no plans for that," said Mr. Musa, who was in Zimbabwe with Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak for the Group of Fifteen (G-15) developing countries summit.

Israel radio quoted unnamed U.S. diplomatic sources on Saturday as saying the Hebron agreement could be signed during the November 12-14 conference in Cairo and that U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher would attend the ceremony.

Asked about the report on Sunday, Mr. Arafat said, "there are some Egyptian efforts concerning this issue." But he declined to elaborate.

A U.S. official close to the negotiations said American mediators hoped agreement would be reached well before the Cairo meeting but that a formal signing ceremony could be held in the Egyptian capital.

"It wouldn't be unusual to have a ceremony after-the-fact and since the United States was a signatory to the Oslo accords it would be normal for the secretary of state to put his initials on (a Hebron agreement)," he said.

In Hebron, British Foreign Secretary Malcolm (Continued on page 7)

U.S. says missiles fired at Iraq; Baghdad denies report

BAGHDAD (Agencies) — A U.S. F-16 jet fighter fired a missile at an Iraqi anti-aircraft battery whose radar started tracking the plane while it patrolled an allied no-fly zone over southern Iraq on Saturday, U.S. officials said Sunday.

In Baghdad, the Iraqi Defence Ministry denied that any such confrontation had occurred and accused the White House of fabricating an incident to help President Bill Clinton get reelected.

"The American allegations are groundless," a Defence Ministry spokesman said in a statement carried by the official Iraqi News Agency (INA). "No incident took place in the airspace of southern Iraq."

He dismissed the report as a "fabrication" by the "American-style electoral campaign" and said Iraq would pursue a proposal from Russia, France and other countries to settle the issue of "illegal air exclusion zones" peacefully.

A White House spokesman said in New Orleans on Saturday that an F-16 fired at an Iraqi missile battery after being

tracked by its radar and that Mr. Clinton had been briefed on the clash while campaigning in the southern United States.

U.S. Air Force Lieutenant Colonel Andrew Bourland said the F-16 fired a High Anti-Radiation Missile (HARM) at a mobile surface-to-air missile system after its radar "illuminated" the plane near Iraq's 32nd Parallel.

"The aircraft returned to Prince Sultan Air Base (in Saudi Arabia) without further incident," Col. Bourland told AFP in Dubai on Sunday from Riyadh.

Col. Bourland, spokesman for the joint task force South West Asia which enforces the no-fly zone from bases in Saudi Arabia and the Gulf, said U.S. forces were trying to determine the damage done to the Iraqi site.

A U.S. military official who asked not to be named said the incident occurred southeast of Kut Al Hayy, which is between the 32nd and 33rd Parallels. The United States unilaterally extended the no-fly zone from the 32nd to the 33rd Parallel after firing cruise missiles at air defence sites

south of Baghdad on Sept. 3-4 to punish Iraq for sending troops into northern Kurdish safe areas.

On Oct. 15, the White House said Iraqi anti-aircraft systems hit by the U.S. cruise missiles in September did not pose a threat to pilots patrolling the no-fly zone.

The Washington Post reported, however, that it took Iraq only two weeks to rebuild its surface-to-air missile network after the United States launched cruise missiles to destroy it.

The daily quoted an unnamed senior U.S. defence official as saying it would take only "a flip of the switch" for Iraq to turn on targeting radar and thus pose a military threat to U.S. and allied aircraft patrolling the zone.

The Sunday's Iraqi statement added that Iraq remained committed to a decision it made in September not to fire on U.S. warplanes enforcing no-fly zones over southern and northern Iraq, but repeated Iraqi assertions that the zones were "illegal."

Warplanes from France and Britain also patrol the zones.

Hebron settlers burn Palestinian's home

HEBRON (AFP) — A Palestinian house on the edge of this West Bank town was allegedly set ablaze overnight by Jewish settlers living nearby, the home's owner said Sunday.

Nu'man Daana, 60, said he was woken up late Saturday night by the shouts of one of his sons "that settlers were gathering outside the house," which lies only a few metres from the edge of Kiryat Arba settlement outside Hebron.

"I looked out and saw three settlers outside the window, they started shouting in Hebrew, then ran off. That's when the fire started," Mr. Daana said.

Mr. Daana and his four sons were injured in the blaze and one of his sons remained in hospital on Sunday. Windows of the home were shattered and furniture inside was destroyed, witnesses said.

A spokesman for the Israeli army said an initial investigation by firemen showed the blaze "was not arson," but the result of "some incident inside the house."

The incident comes only hours ahead of an expected visit to Hebron by British Foreign Minister Malcolm

Rifkind, who arrived in Israel earlier Sunday.

Tension has been rising in Hebron between Palestinians and Jewish settlers ahead of a long-awaited agreement on an Israeli withdrawal from most of Hebron.

Some 420 Jews live in Hebron amid the city's 120,000 Palestinians.

Settler denied bail

A Jerusalem court on Sunday ordered a Jewish settler charged with manslaughter for killing a 10-year-old Palestinian boy to be held without bail until his trial.

Nahum Kurman, chief of security for the small West Bank settlement of Hadar Beit, was indicted on Friday for beating Hilmi Shusha to death a week ago because he believed the boy had been throwing stones at Israeli cars.

The court ruled on Sunday that because of the "cruelty" of the boy's slaying, Kurman should remain in custody pending his trial. The judge said the circumstances of the crime were aggravated by the fact that Kurman, as a trained security guard, should have

avoided violence, not caused it.

No date for the trial has been set.

The indictment said Kurman drove into the village of Husan after hearing reports that village youths had been throwing stones at Israeli cars nearby and chased Hilmi and two cousins down in his jeep.

After jumping from the vehicle, Kurman knocked Hilmi to the ground, put his foot on his neck and beat him unconscious with the butt of a pistol, the indictment said. Hilmi died of brain hemorrhaging at Jerusalem's hospital later Sunday.

The brutality of the slaying shocked Palestinians and Israelis alike and fuelled fears of further violence at a time of rising tensions surrounding Israel's militant settler movement.

Some 250 people, including Israeli and Palestinian legislators, gathered at the Shusha family home on Saturday for a memorial service.

Some of those attending held up signs saying "settlements are time bombs for peace," and "Hilmi your blood was not spilled in vain."



ISRAELI ALERT: An Israeli policeman puts his sniffer dog to work as Israelis at a small cafe appear startled to see a dog going through a potted plant on Sunday amid a high alert in Israel for fear of a possible suicide attack by Palestinian militants on the eve of the first death anniversary of assassinated Islamic Jihad leader Fathi Shaqaqi (Reuters photo)

NEWS IN BRIEF

SLA militiaman killed by Hizbollah bomb

MARJAYOUN (AFP) — A militiaman in the Israeli-backed South Lebanon Army (SLA) was killed in a bomb attack Sunday claimed by pro-Iranian Hizbollah guerrillas, security sources said. The attack occurred on the fringe of Israel's self-declared "security zone" in southern Lebanon, the sources said. Israeli artillery responded with a heavy bombardment of suspected Hizbollah positions. Lebanese police said.

Indian prime minister to visit the UAE

DUBAI (AP) — Indian Prime Minister H.D. Deve Gowda is expected to arrive in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) in December or January, a visiting Indian official said. C.M. Ibrahim, India's aviation minister, said late Saturday that Mr. Gowda would visit the UAE. As part of a tour of Gulf countries, a date for the tour has yet to be finalised. The visit will be the first by an Indian prime minister since the late Indira Gandhi visited the UAE. In 1981, India is one of the UAE's leading trade partners, and there are an estimated 70,000 Indians living and working in the energy-rich country.

Two vessels collide in Turkey's Bosphorus

ISTANBUL (AFP) — A Maltese-flagged freighter collided Sunday with a small Turkish vessel carrying sand in the Bosphorus and the latter sank in the accident, the Anatolia news agency said. The freighter Maria-I collided with Celikranks after entering the strait from the Black Sea, it said. The reason for the collision was unknown. Celikranks sank after the collision but Maria-I rescued its crew members who included one heavily injured sailor. In the last fatal accident in the Bosphorus, a Cypriot tanker collided with a Greek tanker in March 1994. More than 20 people died and more than 100,000 tonnes of oil spilled into the sea.

Prison for looters of Cairo building

CAIRO (AFP) — Six people arrested last week for looting the site of a collapsed apartment building here were sentenced to between one and two years in prison on Sunday. One of the six was sentenced to two years behind bars while the other five were ordered to spend one year in prison. Two suspected looters were acquitted while the case of another was referred to juvenile court. At least 64 people died when the 11-storey apartment building in the upscale suburb of Heliopolis collapsed on Oct. 27. Police said the looters pretended to be helping with the rescue operation to steal jewelry, electrical appliances and other items from the rubble.

Iranian students denounce U.S. on anniversary of embassy takeover

TEHRAN (Agencies) — Thousands of Iranian high school students took to the streets on Sunday to denounce the United States on the anniversary of the seizure of the U.S. embassy here in 1979.

Large crowds gathered in front of the compound which housed the mission in central Tehran to voice their "hatred of the great Satan" for its hostile policies toward Iran.

"America is a blood sucking wolf who was slapped in the face by us on this historic day. There can never be a friendly relationship between a lamb and a wolf," Parliament Speaker Ali Akbar Nateq-Nouri told the crowds outside the compound.

Mr. Nateq-Nouri, tipped as a possible successor to President Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani in next year's elections, said sanctions imposed by Washington against Iran were the latest in a series of U.S. atrocities against the Islamic republic.

But the sanctions "were obviously defeated, because we don't need America and because fortunately not even the close allies of America went along with it," he said, in apparent reference to the refusal of European countries to follow the sanctions.

In a repeat of similar rallies since 1979, long lines of men and women

marched to the former embassy carrying banners calling for the death of the United States and Israel and chanting for the downfall of the "great Satan."

They burned a U.S. flag and an effigy depicting a man in a necktie, a western symbol in Iran where men do not wear ties.

"Islamic Iran does not need America," one banner said.

The United States broke diplomatic ties with Iran in 1980 after the embassy seizure in which 52 Americans were held hostage for 444 days in the wake of the Islamic revolution that toppled the late Shah.

They were protesting U.S. support for the late Shah, Iran's monarchical ruler toppled in the 1979 Islamic revolution. Each year Iran commemorates the event, known as the "day of the fight against world oppressors."

The United States imposed a trade and investment ban on Iran in June 1995, accusing it of sponsoring terrorism and seeking to develop nuclear weapons. Iran denies the charges and says the United States is bent on destroying the Islamic government.

A U.S. law in effect since August tightened the sanctions to include non-U.S. firms.

University professor Reza Akbar Zadeh, 36, said he had been attending the rallies every year since 1979. "It is exactly like a religious tradition for us to participate in this."

The official media said rallies were held across Iran.

The English-language Tehran Times newspaper said the seizure of the embassy in 1979 "ushered in a new era of resistance among the oppressed nations to the global arrogance."

Kayhan International said in an editorial the seizure "broke the myth of America's unquestionable power. The occasion has since become an annual event which marks the need to confront the great Satan's arrogance and hegemony."

Iran's supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei had on Wednesday rejected suggestions that talks could be held with Washington, saying it was only a tactic by the United States to undermine opposing states.

Ayatollah Khamenei was apparently referring to remarks by U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Robert Pelletreau who said during a visit to the region last week that Washington would like to hold talks with Iran on differences.

Amnesty appeals against Bahraini sentences

AMMAN (J.T.) — Amnesty International is urgently calling on the emir of Bahrain, Sheikh Isa Bin Salman Al Khalifa, to commute the death sentences of three men who could be executed at any moment.

The court of cassation, meeting in a brief session on Oct. 27, reportedly ruled that it had no jurisdiction to review the state security court's verdict of July 1 which sentenced to death Ali Ahmad Abd Al Usfur, aged 31, employee in the Ministry of Agriculture; Youssef Hussein Abu Al Baqi, aged 30, an employee in an aluminium company, an Amnesty press release said. The sentences will now pass to the emir for ratification. The three men were convicted of carrying out a firebomb attack on an Asian restaurant on March 14, 1996, in which seven Bangladeshi nationals were killed. "We sympathise with the victims of crime and their families — and acknowledge the right of the Bahraini government to bring the perpetrators to justice — the death penalty has never been shown to deter crimes more effectively than any other punishment but merely brutalises all those involved," Amnesty said.

Orphaned Egyptian boy searches for relatives

CAIRO (AFP) — For the past two days, Egypt has been riveted by the tragedy of a 14-year-old boy whose father, mother, sister and brother died in the collapse of a 11-storey apartment building here. Hadi Shenu-da has appealed to relatives scattered across the world to claim him after his family was crushed to death along with 60 other people in the Oct. 27 collapse of the block of flats.

"My name is Hadi Shenu-da. I'm a student at the Saint George School in Heliopolis. I lost my father, my mother, my brother Shadi and my sister Ghadir in the building collapse," the teenager says in a tearful televised message.

The boy hopes that relatives who live in western and Arab countries will hear his message and come looking for him.

Hadi was saved thanks to a tennis lesson. He left home as usual the Sunday evening of the disaster to play tennis at a neighbouring sporting club.

When he returned home two hours later, the building was a pile of smashed concrete and twisted steel.

Refusing to believe that his parents could be trapped under the rubble, he raced to nearby hospitals to search for his family.

"I thought they were only scratched," he said passively

in the televised message.

For the next four days Hadi stood outside the collapsed building watching every move of rescue workers as they painstakingly removed the bodies of the victims from under the rubble.

"Hadi did not shed one tear throughout this ordeal," said a psychiatrist.

On the fourth day rescue workers brought out the bodies of his father, mother, sister and brother and he still refused to cry or show any emotion.

"He will suffer the consequences later. Once the shock is over and once he is ready to release his pain he will need tremendous love and care as well as professional help to overcome this crisis," doctor Ali Mustafa told AFP.

His tragedy has won the hearts of Egyptians, the Christian Coptic church as well as Saudi King Fahd.

Mohammad Essam Al Margushi, an engineer, and his wife Nadia have taken the boy in while the head of the Coptic Church, Pope Shenouda III, announced he would take responsibility for all his needs.

"I have told His Holiness that I would like to offer Hadi a permanent home in my family," said Margushi, a Muslim, adding that Pope Shenouda had offered him prayer beads and praised his generosity.

Hansen named Larsen's successor

AMMAN (J.T.) — The United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) Commissioner-General Peter Hansen has been provisionally appointed to the post of United Nations special coordinator in the occupied territories, to replace Terje Roed Larsen, who has returned to Norway to join the new government, a UNRWA press release said.

The announcement was released in New York on Oct. 25 by the United Nations secretary-general's office, effective immediately. In releasing the announcement, the secretary-general's spokesman said that Secretary-General Boutros Ghali had asked Mr. Hansen to provisionally take over Mr. Larsen's duties, in addition to his current work as UNRWA commissioner-general.

The special coordinator serves as the focal point within the United Nations for activities undertaken in the context of the October 1993 conference to support Middle East peace, as well as for relations with the donor community and the World Bank. He provides overall guidance to United Nations programmes and agencies in the West Bank and Gaza Strip to ensure that the organisation's overall approach to socio-economic development is integrated and unified.

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Tel. 773111-19	
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14:30	Drama
14:50	Play About
15:00	Varieties — L'Intégrale
15:30	Doc. — Travelling Gourment
16:00	Nature's Inventions
16:30	Hey Dad
17:00	News Flash
17:01	Destiny Ridge
17:30	Magazine — Dassiopfe
19:00	Le Journal
19:15	Magazine — Cinq Sur Cinq
19:30	News Headlines
19:35	Rosanne
20:01	Documentary — Disaster Chronicle
20:30	Cinema, Cinema
21:10	The Lazarus Man
22:00	News in English
22:25	Mini-Series — The Maharaja's Daughter
23:15	Bodies of Evidence
23:59	Dad's Army
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04:31	Fajr
05:50	(Sunrise) Duha
11:19	Dhuhr
14:22	'Asr
16:48	Maghreb
19:07	Isha
CHURCHES	
St. Mary of Nazareth Church	
Sweilieh, Tel. 810740	
Assemblies of God Church Tel. 632785	
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590	
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 637440	
De la Salle Church Tel. 661757	
Terra Sancta Church Tel. 622366	
Anglican Church Tel. 652826	
Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771331	
Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 775261	
St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751	
Amman International Church Tel. 827126	
Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 824328	
German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel. 845457	
The Latter-Day Saints Tel. 654932	
Church of Nazareth Tel. 675691	
The Evangelical Local Church in Amman Tel. 811295	
English-speaking Latin Catholics Parish Tel. 614190	
WEATHER	
Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology.	
Warm weather conditions will prevail with temperatures rising further becoming slightly above average and winds southeasterly moderate. In Aqaba, winds will be northerly	

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

Moderate and seas calm.	EMERGENCIES	Akileh Maternity.....642441/2	QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT
Min./Max. temp.	Food Control Centre.....637111	Majal Amman Maternity.....642362	
Amman.....09/25	Civil Defence Department.....661111	Jabal, J. Amman.....636140	This information is supplied by
Aqaba.....15/30	Civil Defence Immediate Rescue.....630331	Palestine, Shmeisani.....607071	Royal Jordanian (RJ) information
Deserts.....08/26	Civil Defence Emergency.....199	Shmeisani Hospital.....669131	department at the Queen
Jordan Valley.....14/30	Rescue Police.....102 621111, 637777	University Hospital.....845845	Alia International Airport Tel
	Fire Brigade.....617101	Al-Muasher Hospital.....667227/9	(08)53200-5, where it should
Yesterday's high temperatures:	Blood Bank.....775121	The Islamic, Abdali.....666126/37	always be verified.
Amman 23, Aqaba 29 Humidity	Highway Police.....843402	Al-Ahli, Abdali.....664164/6	Information on other flights
readings: Amman 31 per	Traffic Police.....896390	Italian, Al-Muhajreen.....777101/3	are supplied on phone 08
cent. Aqaba 53 per cent.	Public Security Dept.....630321	Al-Bashir.....775111/26	(52700).
	Hotel Complaints.....605800	Army, Marka.....891611/15	
	Price Complaints.....661176	Queen Alia Hospital.....602240/50	
	Water & Sewerage Complaints.....397467	Amal Hospital.....674155	ARRIVALS
	Amman Municipality Complaints.....787111	The Arab Centre for Heart and	Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights
	Telephone Information (directory	Special Surgery.....865199	
NIGHT DUTY	assistance).....121	ZARQA:	
AMMAN:	Overseas Calls.....010230	Zarqa Govt. Hospital	07:15Sana'a (RJ)
Dr. Mukhlis Halaseh.....819220	Central Amman Telephone	Zarqa.....(09)983323	08:35Jeddah (RJ)
Dr. Fadi Al Khatib.....865456	Repairs.....623101	Zarqa National Hospital	08:55Damascus (RJ)
Dr. Ruzi Sukkar.....856457	Abdali Tel. Repairs.....661101	Zarqa.....(09)900560	09:45New Delhi (RJ)
Dr. Youssef Al Fajih.....790140	Jordan Television.....773111	Ibn Sina Hospital.....(09)986732	09:50Dubai, Abu Dhabi (RJ)
Ferdows pharmacy.....778336	Radio Jordan.....774111	Al Hikma Modern Hospital	10:05Beirut (RJ)
Al Asema pharmacy.....637055	Water Authority.....815015(09)990990	16:20Cairo (RJ)
Nairoukh pharmacy.....623672	J. Electricity Company.....686101	IRBID:	17:35 London Amsterdam (RJ)
Al Salam pharmacy.....636730	Electric Power Co.....636381	Princess Basma Hospital	19:05Bangkok (RJ)
Yacoub pharmacy.....644945	RJ Flight Information.....08-53200(02)127555	22:20Casablanca (RJ)
Shmeisani pharmacy.....637660	Queen Alia Intl. Airport 08-53200	Greek Catholic Hospital	03:40 ..Jakarta, Kuala Lumpur (RJ)
Najib pharmacy.....847632	(02)127275	
IRBID:		Ibn Al Nafes Hospital	Other Flights
Dr. Mozen Abu Bakr.....776852	(02)247100	09:30Cairo (MS)
Al Quds pharmacy.....(001)		AQABA:	12:40Bahrain (GF)
ZARQA:		Princess Haya Hospital	14:20Athens, Beirut (Q7)
Dr. Issa Al Omari.....901286	(03)314111	15:05Vienna (OS)
Khalifeh pharmacy.....985417			20:00Khartoum (SD)
	HOSPITAL		21:00Paris, Damascus (AF)
	AMMAN:		21:40Tel Aviv (IA)
	Hussein Medical Centre.....813813/32		22:45Athens, Beirut (OA)
	Khalidi Maternity.....644281/6		
		FOR THE TRAVELLER	

00:30	London (BA)
01:20	Amsterdam, Damascus (KL)
Royal Wings (RW) Flights	
09:20	Aqaba (RW)
20:50	Aqaba (RW)
DEPARTURES	
Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights	
06:20	Beirut (RJ)
09:50	Casablanca (RJ)
11:00	Amsterdam, Chicago (RJ)
12:15	Cairo (RJ)
12:15	London (RJ)
12:30	Frankfurt (RJ)
20:15	Bahrain, Doha (RJ)
21:00	Abu Dhabi (RJ)
21:15	Dubai, Muscat (RJ)
22:00	Jeddah (RJ)
22:45	Sanaa (RJ)
23:00	Damascus (RJ)
Other Flights	
07:35	Beirut, London (BA)
07:45	Beirut (ME)
10:20	Cairo (MS)
13:30	Bahrain (GF)
15:15	Doha (Q7)
15:50	Vienna (OS)
21:00	Khartoum (SD)
22:50	Tel Aviv (LY)
23:55	Damascus, Paris (AF)
02:30	Amsterdam (KL)
03:00	Beirut, Athens (OA)
07:35	Damascus, London (BA)
Royal Wings (RW) Flights	
09:50	Marka Airport (from QAIA)
HIJAZ RAILWAY TRAIN	

MARKET PRICES

Upper/lower price in fils per kg.

Apple	700/500
Banana	550/550
Banana (imported)	850/600
Cabbage	110/80
Carrot	280/170
Cauliflower	230/180
Cucumber (large)	180/120
Cucumber (small)	350/200
Eggplant	180/120
Garlic	700/500
Grapes	550/350
Guava	500/450
Lemon	360/200
Marrow (large)	200/120
Marrow (small)	300/200
Onion (green)	300/160
Onion (dry)	130/80
Olive (green)	500/400
Olive (black)	800/500
Pear	580/430
Pepper (hot)	280/240
Pepper (sweet)	300/240
Potato	320/220
Spinach	280/110
String Bean	450/320
Tomato	290/180

Handwritten signature or note in Arabic script.

Queen attends ballet performance to raise funds for music scholarships

AMMAN (J.T.) — On the occasion of His Majesty King Hussein's birthday, Her Majesty Queen Noor Sunday attended a fund-raising ballet performance of "Giselle" given by the French Ballet du Nord at the Royal Cultural Centre, a Royal Court statement said.

Proceeds of the performance, organised by the National Music Conservatory (NMC) and the French Cultural Centre, will go

towards the NMC "Fund for Needy and Talented Students."

The internationally acclaimed Ballet du Nord rehearsed earlier that day with Jordanian ballet students, is affiliated to the French Ministry of Culture and has performed throughout Europe as well as the Jerash Festival for Culture and Arts, the statement said. Attending the performance with Queen Noor

were Advisor to the Queen In'am Mufti, Chair of the NMC Steering Committee Hind Nasser, French Ambassador to Jordan Bernard Bajolet, French Cultural Attaché Genevieve Van Rosum, Director of the French Cultural Centre Dennis Toupain, Noor Al Hussein Foundation Executive Director Ibrahim Badran and members of the NMC Board.

GTZ to extend Karak water project

Poultry farmers air grievances to minister

AMMAN (Petra) — A team of German Agency for Technical Cooperation (GTZ) experts, who reviewed progress on a water project in the Karak area Sunday, announced that the agency will extend the work period through to the year 2000.

The project, being implemented in the Wadi Ben Hammad area and funded by the agency, is conducted in conjunction with the Ministry of Agriculture. It aims at stemming desertification, utilising rainwater in the development of agricultural lands, and cultivating forests and grazing pastures.

The German experts were accompanied on Sunday's tour by Minister of Agriculture Mustafa

Shneikat, who said that the ministry was expanding this project to include other areas in the Kingdom.

Dr. Shneikat added that the project would provide incentives to local farmers to develop their lands and increase production.

The project's various stages were progressing as planned, the German team said.

Also Sunday, Dr. Shneikat received a group of persons representing poultry farmers who called to urge the Ministry of Agriculture to take measures in securing inputs, veterinary medication and fodder as well as providing protection for the production and opening of veterinary laboratories.

Khaldoun Subeih, an engineer and head of the ministry's Information Department, said the poultry farming sector is facing chronic problems which affect the management of poultry farms and production as well as the pricing and marketing of poultry meat.

Dr. Shneikat suggested that poultry farmers create their own cooperative societies to ensure importation of animal feed and other inputs at reasonable cost.

He said that the ministry has created a committee which will conduct spot checks on farms to observe their production, provide advice and help prevent the spread of disease.

Tourism sector announces new programme to encourage visitors

AMMAN (Petra) — Minister of Tourism and Antiquities Saleh Irsheidat Sunday presented a programme entitled "Discover Jordan" to tour operators and representatives of tourist and travel agents in Jordan.

These representatives gathered at a meeting to discuss ways to stimulate the tourism industry and agreed that the government has backed the private sector's role in its quest to improve this industry following months of low tourism activity.

"The programme was worked out by a special technical committee in the past two months and approved by the Council of Ministers which emphasised the necessity of the Ministry of Tourism to work hand-in-hand with the private sector to promote tourism in Jordan," said Dr. Irsheidat.

"Forecasts and predictions over the past few months indicate that Jordan and other Middle Eastern countries are facing a decline in the number of tourists as tourist agents abroad have cancelled contracts and postponed trips in the light of regional political changes and their negative impact on the peace process, particularly recent developments in Lebanon and Jerusalem,"

the minister said.

Dr. Irsheidat told a meeting assembled last September that tourism in Jordan has, indeed, declined in the past six months and neither are there signs pointing to any improvement of the situation for the rest of the year, noting that thousands of tourists from Europe and the United States have cancelled reservations.

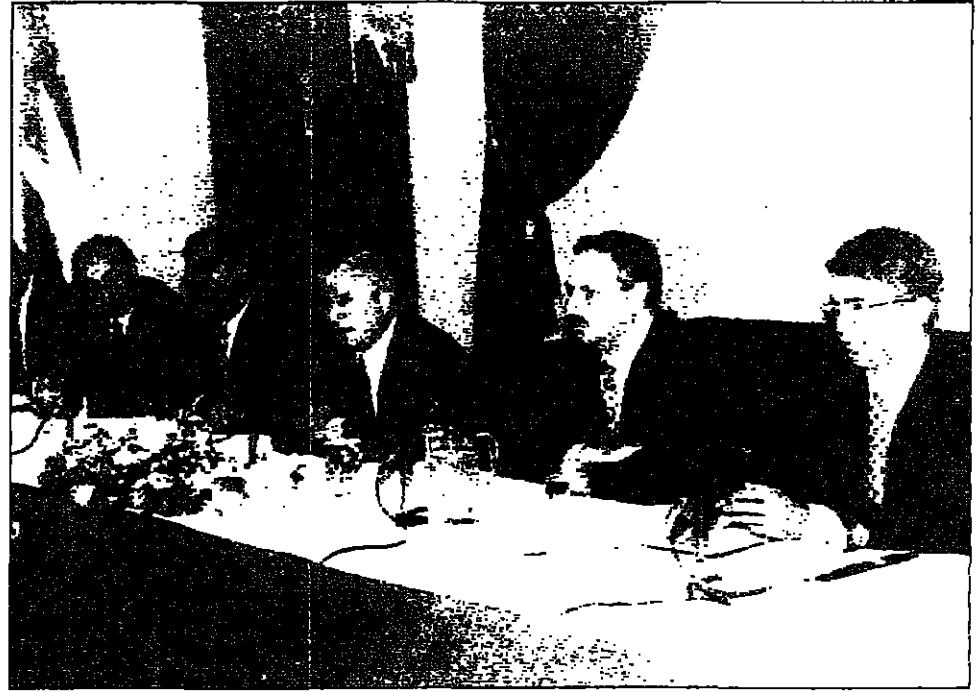
Dr. Irsheidat told the Sunday meeting that the committee's programme is designed to deal with the consequences of the situation and how to better stimulate the tourism industry.

According to the minister, the committee has recommended reducing transport and hotel fares in Jordan and the government has already reduced fares charged to tourists entering archaeological and tourist sites.

Dr. Irsheidat said that the initial reading of the programme showed it as quite positive and could move to being extremely successful depending on the extent of cooperation between the various concerned sectors.

"The government fully realises the importance of tourism industry to the national economy and is ready to contribute towards solving any obstacles," the minister said.

Participants in the meet-



Minister of Tourism and Antiquities Saleh Irsheidat Sunday presents a new programme to boost tourism in Jordan (Petra photo)

ing approved of the new programme, however requested that the newly-sanctioned reduced prices not be applied on contracts already concluded with tourist groups and that no further rate reduction be introduced, other than those heretofore specified.

Meanwhile in Aqaba, Jordanian and Egyptian ministers of transport, Naser Lawzi and Suleiman Mitweli Sunday

announced reduced transportation fares between the two countries via Aqaba to be limited to ferries.

Director General of the Arab Maritime Bridge Company Abdul Razaq Abdul Wahab confirmed that Jordan and Egypt released a statement to the effect that the two sides agreed on exempting children under five years of age from paying any fare on the ferries commuting

between Aqaba and

He also listed a 50 per cent reduction in fares for children up to 12 years of age.

The two sides also agreed to encourage bus travel between Jordan and Egypt and Mr. Abdul Wahab explained that the fare for ferrying these buses will be reduced by 30 per cent to \$255 down from \$360.

Majali denies discord in council of ministers

AMMAN (J.T.) — Minister of Public Works Abdul Hadi Majali denied rumours about conflict within the council of ministers, stating that on the contrary harmony prevails among the cabinet ministers who are given freedom to air their views at cabinet sessions.

Speaking in an interview with the staff of the Arabic daily Al Ra'i, Mr. Majali was quoted as saying "I categorically deny any disharmony. We are a government which represents various shades of the Jordanian society and we work in complete harmony. That which pains me is to hear people say that there is a division within the government any time a cabinet member opposes a cabinet decision. What I want to stress here is that no decision is taken and endorsed except with the approval of all cabinet members."

Rumours that the prime

minister is imposing his will on the council are baseless, the minister said, adding that the major decisions taken by the government have come after protracted debates inside the council. Indeed, he emphasised, council sessions last a minimum of four hours that the cabinet might hear the views of all participating members.

"I might not [initially] agree with my colleagues but through debate we reach a decision," added Mr. Majali who noted that "there have been some ideas and proposals suggested by the prime minister but turned down by the cabinet." This, he maintained "indicates full harmony and democracy within the government and complete freedom for every minister to say whatever he desires."

He said that any minister who does not approve of an idea and therefore votes against it normally

announces his or her commitment to the decisions which are passed by a majority vote.

Mr. Majali also stated his belief that the government implements reforms not from a desire to end problems but rather to find any imbalances and correct them.

Asked if there were any signs about discord between the government and the Lower House of Parliament, due to convene on Nov. 19, Mr. Majali said "this is journalistic talk. The session will be opened by a speech from the Throne which will outline the government's policy and report its achievements. There is no current friction between the House and the government but there might be one during a debate over the fiscal budget to be presented to the Parliament."

The Parliament, he confirmed, has the right to reject

or approve the budget's provisions.

"[I cannot conceive of] any serious friction between the two sides simply because the government is composed of House members - which is a genuine demonstration of democracy," said Mr. Majali. He explained that the House groups different blocs which are represented in the cabinet, and that in his view there would be a real crisis should ministers representing these blocs tender resignations.

"We have 22 ministers and 47 deputies and so the government rules with the majority. This majority creates the government's policies and in this situation the government is not bound to encounter any problems unless it [fights] itself and this is not projected to happen," the minister concluded.

Court sentences guard to death for murder of physician

By Ahmad Kreishan
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The Criminal Court Sunday sentenced 24-year old Abdul Fattah Mustafa Mohamamd Freihath to death by hanging after convicting him of murdering Iman Yassin 26-year old physician.

Mustafa who worked as a guard and maintenance worker at the Fardous Housing Complex in Amman killed Ms. Yassin after breaking into her apartment in early August with the intention of raping her, the judgement read.

Court Prosecutor Ali Abu Hijleh had said in his charge sheet that a

struggle ensued between the victim and the defendant, and the woman's head struck a radiator, causing her death.

Mustafa had pleaded not guilty before the court on five charges: murder, attempted rape, sexual aggression, breaking and entering, and intoxication saying he did not intend to kill Iman but rather was trying to stop her from screaming and placed his hands on her throat and mouth when she fell.

The court, presided over by judge Abdul Rahman Tawfiq, ruled that the accused had admitted breaking into the home of the deceased with the purpose of rap-

ing his victim and supported reports by the police and the court prosecutor as well as the pathologist's statement that the scratches on the face and neck of the accused were caused by the victim while trying to resist her attacker.

Police investigate suspected double suicide

Meanwhile, police in Jerash Sunday were investigating the death of two people in what authorities suspect is a case of double suicide.

The bodies of Ahmad Khawaldeh, 24, from Bani Hassan, and Rima, 20, from Amman were

found next to each other on Thursday. Police found a note next to the bodies saying that the couple had decided to take their own lives as their families had refused them permission to marry.

Police said the note said that the couple were in their full mental capacity when they decided to kill themselves hoping God will keep them together after death.

The authorities said that Ahmad had shot the young woman first and then put the gun to his head and shot himself.

They said that the man died instantly, and the woman was found alive but died three days later.

WHAT'S GOING ON

LECTURE

* "The Poetry of Experience" by Dr. Nicholas Linfield at the British Council at 5:00 p.m.

EXHIBITIONS

* Works by Maha Abu Ghosh at Institut Cer-vantes, Jabal Amman, until Nov. 16.

* Exhibition of works by Zurich-based Jordanian artist Nabil Shehadeh at Darat Al Funun, Jabal Weibdeh. Also displaying works by Jordanian artist Mohammad Nasrallah and works by contemporary artists, until Nov. 13.

* Timeless Weaving and New Creations — Home Furnishings and Accessories" at the Jordan Crafts Development Centre (Al Aydi), Jabal Amman, Second Circle, until Nov. 10.

* Abstract (plastic) art by Sa'id Haddadin at Orfali Art Gallery, Um Utheina, until Nov. 5.

* Exhibition of "Visual Forms" by Abdul Latif Al Smoodi at Baladan Art Gallery, Gardens street, until Nov. 15.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Minister, ambassador cover MENA

AMMAN (Petra) — Minister of Industry and Trade Ali Abul Ragheb Sunday received the Egyptian Ambassador to Jordan Hani Riad and the two reviewed bilateral ties particularly in the economic field. Discussions also covered means to enhance joint bilateral cooperation in light of economic changes in the region. The two men also discussed preparations regarding the regional economic conference slated to be held in Cairo on Nov. 12.

Minister stresses environmental integrity

AMMAN (Petra) — Minister of Municipal and Rural Affairs and the Environment Abdul Razzaq Tubeishat Sunday received the Romanian Ambassador to Jordan Ioan Agafichioaie and covered bilateral relations and especially environment-related issues. Dr. Tubeishat maintained the Kingdom's ecological concern regarding Jordan, the region and the world as well as His Majesty King Hussein's participation in all international conventions and events pertaining to environmental integrity. He also stressed the importance of enhancing relations between Jordan and Romania in terms of wastewater treatment and exchange of information in that regard.

Masri leaves for Britain for talks

AMMAN (Petra) — Minister of Education Munther Masri Sunday left for Britain on a several-day official visit upon an invitation from the British Council. The minister is expected to meet with British officials to discuss educational-related issues.

Surgeon conference begins today

AMMAN (Petra) — The twenty-fourth conference of Jordanian surgeons and the fourth of the Jordanian-German Surgeons Society begins today at Jabri Hall in Amman with the participation of 350 Jordanian, German and foreign surgeons. The conference, which will last three days, will cover over 60 reports and studies regarding aspects related to surgery.

University president hosts culture chat

IRBID (Petra) — President of Yarmouk University Ahmad Salim Sunday received German Ambassador to Jordan Peter Mende and the two concentrated on academic, cultural and scientific fields and means of enhancing same.

University teachers form political science society to upgrade teaching

AMMAN (Petra) — Twenty-four university teachers from five universities have created the Jordanian Political Science Society, according to a statement released Sunday.

The professors say that this society is geared towards teaching political science and raising the level of efficiency in this endeavour.

The statement, from the Applied Science University (ASU) where the initialing of an agreement on this project took place, said that the 24 teachers hold posts at the University of Jordan, Yarmouk University, Muta University, Al Bayt University, the ASU and the Jordan Institute of Diplomacy which houses research and studies centres.

The announcement of the society followed a seminar at ASU regarding the teaching of political science and was addressed and attended by specialists from various universities.

The statement said that the society is open for membership by teachers working in the field of political science and will be purely academic in nature.

Members of the society have pledged to work in upgrading the teaching of political science, implementing activities connected with the documentation of various issues in the field, facilitating the publication and distribution of pertinent information, encouraging field research and stimulating Arabic translations of various scientific writings in political science, the statement said.

The statement described three categories of members: Active, supporting and honorary, with the stipulation that active members should be Jordanian with doctorate degrees in their field or in scientific research as well as working in their field of specialisation for at least three years.

The supporting members will be providing financial and other assistance to the society whose seven-member board will be awarding honorary membership to those who offer contributions and will draw its revenues from membership fees and contributions.

Romanians decide between Iliescu or faster change

BUCHAREST (R) — Romanians reeling from seven years of post-Communist poverty went to the polls Sunday to choose between President Ion Iliescu's cautious approach to reform or rivals pressing for faster change.

Mr. Iliescu, in power since Stalinist dictator Nicolae Ceausescu was shot in 1989, voted just after 7 a.m. and said the presidential and parliamentary ballot was proof of Romania's commitment to democracy.

"I regard these elections as a normalisation of the general climate and the general political development of our country," said Mr. Iliescu, after he and his wife Nina voted.

The comments by Mr. Iliescu, an ex-Communist, were directed at Western suspicions of his democratic credentials and his administration of former Ceausescu functionaries.

Romania's standing with NATO and the European Union — which it is eager to join — will depend on a free and fair election. The Balkan country is the only East European state where anti-Communists have not had a period in power.

Opposition parties have expressed fears of mass fraud engineered by Mr. Iliescu's Party of Social Democracy (PDSR).

The president expressed confidence in victory during a bruising campaign. On Sunday he said only that he believed he would win through to a run-off round later this month.

Opinion polls, fairly unreliable in Romania, have given Mr. Iliescu a slight lead over 15 rivals in the



Romanian President Ion Iliescu makes the victory sign after casting his ballot in Sunday's general elections. Mr. Iliescu, a former Communist, looks set to win a fresh term in office but voters may end his party's dominance of parliament, opinion polls suggest (Reuters photo)

presidential race.

But his party, reviled by many because of corruption scandals, trails the Democratic Convention (CDR) in the parliamentary vote. The president could face a hostile parliament demanding faster reforms if

he wins.

His main rivals, CDR leader Emil Constantinescu and ex-Premier Petre Roman, have gained ground recently.

Many of the 17 million voters appear disgusted at soaring prices, charges of

ruling party incompetence and an economic slump that has pushed living standards well below those of near neighbours Hungary, Poland, and the Czech Republic.

Average monthly wages remain below \$100.

"It took a while to leaf through the ballot papers but I found the party I was looking for," said Radu Stefan, a voter in his fifties. "I will only say that I voted for change."

Polls opened at 6 a.m. (0400 GMT) in brilliant sunshine. Early voters were mainly elderly people keen to avoid a rush.

Official election results are due late Monday.

"I haven't eaten in three days and I'm here to make sure things change," said an unemployed man who was interviewed by local television as he waited for polling stations to open.

To form a ground-breaking government, the centrist CDR will need to ally with Roman's Social Democratic Union (USD). Both parties promise quicker economic reforms and an end to abuse of power, but disputes have so far kept them apart.

Mr. Iliescu, who easily won elections in 1990 and 1992, has portrayed himself as a bulwark of stability. He points to the steep economic decline and conflicts in neighbouring Bulgaria and Yugoslavia as pitfalls to be avoided.

Good weather may encourage a high turnout — a factor that favours Mr. Iliescu, who is popular in rural areas but has lost support among industrial workers.



Romanian soldiers line up to receive voting ballots at a military barracks as they prepare to deliver their verdict in Sunday's general elections. Romania is the only Eastern European country where the opposition has not been able to oust ex-Communists from power through the ballot box (Reuters photo)

Former Sri Lankan president's funeral triggers political battle

COLOMBO (AFP) — The state funeral of Sri Lanka's former President Junius Jayewardene has triggered a new confrontation between the opposition and the government over arrangements.

Officials said Sunday.

Mr. Jayewardene's opposition United National Party (UNP) asked the government to declare a day of national mourning and grant a public holiday for the cremation but the authorities refused, party officials said.

Government radio repeated announcements saying that Monday, the day of the funeral, will not be a national holiday.

The government had, however, agreed to a state funeral for Mr. Jayewardene who died here Friday of

cancer at the age of 90. He was Sri Lanka's first executive president and ruled for 12 years until retiring in 1989.

Five provincial councils controlled by Mr. Jayewardene's UNP declared Monday a holiday so that public sector workers under their administrations, the highest level of local government, could attend the funeral.

There has been no reaction to the death from President Chandrika Kumaratunga whose late husband was detained on false sedition charges in 1981 by the Mr. Jayewardene administration.

Mr. Jayewardene also took away the civil rights of the present Prime Minister Sirima Bandaranaike for six years after a highly contro-

versial inquiry ordered by him in October 1980.

Condolence messages have come in from neighbouring India as well as from Japan, a close ally of Mr. Jayewardene, but the Colombo government has remained silent.

One of Mr. Jayewardene's eyes was sent to Japan while the other will go to a Sri Lankan needing a transplant, the eye donation society here said.

In deference to Mr. Jayewardene's wishes, the cremation will be at the Buddhist temple town of Kelaniya, just outside the capital.

Police said they have already tightened security in the area ahead of the funeral.

Burmese police block roads ahead of Suu Kyi speech

RANGOON (R) — Burmese police blocked access to democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi's street Sunday, a sign authorities would probably once again prevent the Nobel Peace laureate from giving a regular weekend speech to supporters.

Traffic police and military intelligence officers were stationed about 100 metres each side of Ms. Suu Kyi's University Avenue home at mid-morning, barring cars from driving near her house. Pedestrians were also asked to stay away.

"You cannot go through," said one man, apparently a military intelligence officer. "You can go other places, but for government security you cannot go past."

On Saturday, Ms. Suu Kyi was prevented from holding her regular afternoon speech after police blocked access to her house.

The road was not originally blocked, but police set up checkpoints manned by riot police after several hundred people refused to disperse.

Dichard supporters who came to hear Ms. Suu Kyi speak told Reuters they would return Sunday.

Ms. Suu Kyi eventually left her house in a car Saturday afternoon and drove outside the barricades to speak to at least two different groups of supporters.

"Keep trying," she told one group who ran to catch up to her car so they could hear her speak. "I will try to be able to hold our talks officially tomorrow."

A short distance away she spoke to another group who had been forced away from the intersection leading to her house. This time the group erupted into cheers, witnesses said.

This is the sixth consecutive weekend Ms. Suu Kyi has been prevented from making her regular speeches. She normally speaks for an hour Saturdays, and Sundays she and her two top lieutenants, Kyi Maung and Tin Oo, speak for 20 minutes each.

The speeches began as spontaneous gatherings after Ms. Suu Kyi was released from six years of house arrest in July 1995. But they have become a

regular weekend fixture and are the only way Ms. Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy (NLD) party can disseminate information.

Ms. Suu Kyi speaks about NLD policies and also answers questions on everything from the government and education to how to make ends meet.

The ruling State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC) has declared the gatherings illegal and said unless they are held inside Ms. Suu Kyi's compound, they will be stopped.

But Suu Kyi said they were public gatherings that should not be held behind closed doors.

The SLORC began preventing the weekend gatherings as part of a crackdown on the NLD in late September, setting up checkpoints manned by heavily-armed security officials.

It also arrested 573 NLD members or supporters who planned to attend a Sept. 27-29 party congress. They were later released.

The NLD won a landslide victory in a 1990 election but the SLORC refused to recognise results of the poll.

In Manila, leading Asian democrats Sunday urged Burma to hasten the return of freedom, warning the "fumes of discontent" in that country could explode into violence affecting the whole of Asia.

Former Philippine President Corason Aquino, who once inspired unarmed civilians to stand firm against the army, and pro-democracy activists from South Korea, Taiwan and Burma issued the call at the start of a two-day meeting in Manila.

The aim of the meeting, attended by about 100 delegates from 15 nations, is to find ways to persuade Burma's military rulers to relax their grip.

"The stubborn refusal of SLORC to unblock avenues for peaceful self-expression is bottling up fumes of discontent that may soon turn noxious and burst violently across the land," Mrs. Aquino said in a speech.

Mrs. Aquino, who helped lead the so-called "people

power" revolt that overthrew President Ferdinand Marcos in 1986, said the Philippine example of restoring democracy peacefully sent a message to all dictators.

"But it is apparently taking time for some of the region's governments to heed it and to learn the lesson that it is better to yield to peaceful, massive appeals of the population than to wait for that population to explode in violent revolution."

Sein Win, prime minister of a U.S.-based Burmese government in exile, said violence in his country would affect the entire region. He said the political temperature in Burma was rising and "more clashes are likely."

"If left to the generals alone, the situation in Burma could explode and affect the stability of the Asia-Pacific region," he said, urging the association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) to persuade SLORC to open talks with Ms. Suu Kyi.

Burma has applied for membership in ASEAN but three members of the regional grouping — the Philippines, Thailand and Singapore — have expressed reservations.

South Korean opposition leader Kim Dae-Jung said Indonesia and Burma were examples of countries "which continue to suffer from oppressive military dictators and authoritarian systems."

"I believe it is high time for us to be concerned also about the issues of democratisation in Indonesia" where "the democratic forces led by Mrs. Megawati are severely repressed," he said.

Indonesia, embarrassed by the recent awarding of the Nobel Peace Prize to two opponents of its rule in East Timor, has also cracked down on supporters of Megawati Sukarnoputri.

Mr. Kim said the world was undergoing an information revolution and this could not thrive where individuality and creativity were suppressed.

The meeting was organised by the Forum of democratic Leaders in the Asia-Pacific.

N. Korea hints at releasing arrested U.S. citizen

SEOUL (AFP) — In an apparent move to mend fences with Washington, North Korea Sunday hinted at releasing a U.S. citizen arrested in August on charges of spying for South Korea.

In talks last week in New York, the North promised to consider settling the issue "for the sake of progress" in ties with Washington, a North Korean foreign ministry spokesman said.

"The DPRK (North Korea) side, requested by the U.S. side to settle the issue of Evan Carl Hunzike, a U.S. citizen who illegally entered the DPRK, from a humanitarian point of view said the issue may be considered for the sake of progress in DPRK-U.S. ties," he said.

It was North Korea's first official indication that Mr. Hunzike, detained in the North August 24, might be released.

Washington has pressed for North Korea to allow a Swedish diplomat to meet with Mr. Hunzike. Sweden represents U.S. interests with North Korea.

The row over Mr. Hunzike came as tension grew between the two Koreas over the incursion of a North Korean submarine into South Korean waters on Sept. 18 with 26 agents aboard.

"We believe North Korea should do something to atone for its incursion," U.S. state department spokesman Nicholas Burns said last week, commenting on two rounds of U.S.-North Korean talks in New York in October.

South Korea has called on Washington to slow its rapprochement with Pyongyang, asking the Communist North to apologize for the incursion or face further isolation.

Under a landmark agreement in 1994, which defused a nuclear crisis on the Korean peninsula, Washington promised political and economic benefits. In return, the North froze its controversial nuclear program.

The North Korean spokesman, speaking through the Korean central news agency, described the New York meeting as "constructive. North Korea confirmed 'the U.S. side's willingness to discharge its obligation' for the implementation of the 1994 deal and improvement of relations."

"In defiance of some arguments widespread over the prevailing situation," he said.

"The U.S. side promised again to go ahead with heavy oil shipments and supply of light water reactors under the framework agreement, without regard to any external effects," the spokesman said.

The North's conciliatory gesture followed a high-level security conference in Washington last week between U.S. and South Korean military leaders.

"The submarine incursion confirmed that the North continues to pose a significant threat to peace on the peninsula and stability in the entire region," U.S. Defense Secretary William Perry said.

South Korean Defense Minister Kim Dong-Jin warned that depending on the situation, South Korea and the United States could jointly "plan and implement" team spirit.

But the two defense chiefs said they have yet to decide whether to resume "team spirit" joint military maneuvers suspended for two years to foster an improved climate on the peninsula.

Mr. Kim and Mr. Perry also agreed to fully implement the 1994 agreement touted as one of U.S. President Bill Clinton's diplomatic coups.

Breakaway Khmer Rouge to join Cambodian army

PHNOM PENH (R) — Breakaway Khmer Rouge commanders have agreed to merge their 4,000 fighters with Cambodian government forces on Nov. 6, top officials from the two sides said Sunday.

In another blow to the Khmer Rouge, a further 3,400 rebels from four divisions and one regiment in the central province of Kompong Thom announced that they and 25,000 family members were ready to defect to the government.

Sok Peap, commander of the breakaway Khmer Rouge base of Phnom Malai, told Reuters Sunday that dissident guerrilla leader Ieng Sary had decided to integrate his estimated 4,000 fighters with the Royal Cambodian Armed Forces.

Ek Sereyath, secretary of state for the defence ministry, told Reuters that armed forces deputy chief of staff General Nhek Bun Chhay had flown to Ieng Sary's base at Pailin in the northwest to finalise preparations for Wednesday's ceremony.

In a separate statement, read out on a local radio station Sunday, the four divisions and one regiment from Kompong Thom said they were ready to defect.

The statement was dated Nov. 1.

"We want to finish the war urgently," said the statement. "We have no conditions. Mainly we want safety and development."

The defectors were angry that an opportunity for peace had been lost in 1991 and 1992 when U.N. forces were in Cambodia to oversee a peace pact signed by the Khmer Rouge and its rivals.

"A few obstinate leaders changed the situation to bloodshed again, which made us very, very sorry for the wasted chance," the statement said.

The announcements speed the unravelling of the Khmer Rouge hardliners since early August, when Ieng Sary broke with forces loyal to Khmer Rouge supreme Pol Pot.

Ieng Sary was pardoned in



Khmer Rouge soldiers provide security for an Oct. 22 visit by Prime Minister Hun Sen to Pailin. Breakaway Khmer Rouge commanders have agreed to merge their 4,000 fighters with Cambodian government forces on Nov. 6 (Reuters photo)

September for his role in the brutal Khmer Rouge regime of 1975-1979 that left more than one million Cambodians dead from murder, overwork, disease or malnutrition.

The royal amnesty from a 1979 death sentence allowed peace talks to resume between the government and his guerrilla followers based along the northwest border with Thailand.

Co-premiers Prince Norodom Ranariddh and Hun Sen last month met separately with Ieng Sary in Pailin, and their independent negotiations have led to a widening rift within the coalition government that shows no signs of mending soon, analysts said.

Ranariddh, speaking to reporters late Saturday, said he had brought Sok Peap and Ei Chien, commander of Pailin, to Phnom Penh last week for talks about

tensions between rival guerrillas and integration with government forces.

Asked if Hun Sen knew about the secret talks, Ranariddh said: "I forgot to inform him about it."

Ranariddh said he believed the breakaway fighters deserved at least one general staff position in the royal armed forces, a proposal Hun Sen has rejected.

In a strongly worded address recorded Saturday night and broadcast on local radio Sunday, Hun Sen blamed the delays in Ieng Sary's merger on unnamed politicians in Phnom Penh.

"Our country is very sorry and our compatriots are very sad because some politicians in Phnom Penh tell the breakaway Khmer Rouge to demand top positions," he said. "This case makes the Cambodian people fall into bloodshed again."

Pakistan court reinstates ousted Punjab chief

LAHORE, Pakistan (R) — A Pakistani court reinstated the ousted chief minister of Punjab province Sunday in a setback for Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto.

The Lahore high court gave Manzoor Wattoo, ousted in September 1995 on Ms. Bhutto's recommendation, 10 days to prove his majority in the assembly in Pakistan's most populous province.

The three-member bench said in its order that if Mr. Wattoo failed to win a vote of confidence, outgoing Chief Minister Arif Nakai, whose party is in Ms. Bhutto's federal governing coalition, would be returned to power in Punjab.

President Farooq Leghari, acting on Ms. Bhutto's mandatory advice, suspended Mr. Wattoo last year after a revolt by most provincial ministers. Nakai later assumed power in the fertile, central province that borders India.

Newspapers had said Mr. Wattoo's return to power would be a blow to Ms. Bhutto's government, which has been under pressure from intensifying opposition protests.

"If Mr. Wattoo becomes chief minister again, the government at the centre will have to struggle to survive," the English-language daily the news said Sunday. "The restoration will create an atmosphere of unmitigated uncertainty."

It said Mr. Wattoo's return could stoke tension between the federal and Punjab governments, weakening Ms. Bhutto's hold on power.

But Mr. Wattoo's prospect of winning a vote of confidence was uncertain.

His faction of the Pakistan Muslim League (PML-N) has only a handful of deputies in the Punjab provincial assembly and would need the support of the main PML opposition party led by former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and other groups to survive.

Handwritten signature: *سید محمد یونس*



Republican presidential candidate Bob Dole waves to the audience packing the gym at Ashland University. Sen. Dole began his 96-hour nonstop campaign swing up to election day at the rally here (Reuter photo)

Tutsi rebels drive Zairean army from eastern towns

BUKAVU, Zaire (R) — More than one million refugees have been abandoned to their fate in eastern Zaire where Tutsi rebels have driven Zaire's rag-tag army from a string of towns bordering Tutsi-led Rwanda and Burundi.

"The biggest problem is that we have left behind us hundreds of thousands of refugees who have absolutely nobody to feed them," Michelle Quintaglie of the U.N. World Food Programme said after foreign aid workers fled across the Rwandan border.

"With our departure there is not a single relief worker in the entire eastern Zaire region," said Panos Moum-tzis of the U.N. refugee agency, UNHCR. "The prospects for the Rwandans and the Zaireans are disastrous."

The battle for Goma, headquarters of the international relief effort in the region, raged Saturday with Zairean troops fighting rebels and Rwandan soldiers, witnesses said.

It was unclear who controlled the city at nightfall but Reuters photographer George Malala said much of the centre of Goma, a key base for the Zairean army, was in the hands of the Rwandans and rebels.

In Bukavu to the south, the rebels consolidated their hold and prepared to welcome their leader Laurent Kabila, posting guards on shops and warning looters they would be hanged.

"Don't be afraid of our army. We are not the same as the army we have driven out. We are not going to steal and loot from you as

they did," a spokesman said.

Corpses were strewn on Bukavu's streets. Initial estimates put the death toll at at least 83, including the Roman Catholic archbishop of Bukavu.

Zaire is the latest victim of Hutu-Tutsi rivalry which has blighted life in Rwanda and Burundi for generations.

More than one million Hutu refugees have lived in camps in eastern Zaire since 1994 when they fled Rwanda fearing reprisals or an upsurge in civil war after the genocide of Tutsis there.

Around 200,000 Hutus from Burundi are also in Zaire, having fled ethnic violence at home.

Tens of thousands of Zaireans caught up in the fighting have joined the mass of displaced humanity in the conflict zone.

In Mugunga Camp west of Goma, the world's biggest refugee complex, the 400,000 Rwandans included thousands of armed Hutu hardliners blamed for the 1994 genocide.

In Kinshasa, Zaire's army chief of general staff, General Eluki Monga Aundu, accused Prime Minister Kengo Wa Dondo, himself part-Tutsi, of not doing enough to help soldiers at the front.

"We regret that the government is moving too slowly and has not yet given us the necessary means," he said.

Kengo, a target of army and popular criticism and under growing pressure to resign, ruled out peace talks until all foreign troops left Zairean soil.

Cuba rejects storm aid from U.S.

HAVANA (R) — Cuba said Saturday it was not accepting part of a plane load of food aid for victims of Hurricane Lili sent by Cuban-Americans because packages had been adorned with political, "counter-revolutionary" slogans.

The government said in a statement published in the ruling Communist Party newspaper Granma that it had decided to accept "all the cargo...that does not have political inscriptions and suggestive, provocative and counter-revolutionary messages."

The aid, consisting of a total of some 30 tonnes of rice, milk and beans, arrived in Havana on a charter flight from Miami a week ago, but so far had not been moved to affected areas of the country for distribution.

Caritas Cubana Director Rolando Suarez said it was true that before the cargo arrived it had been agreed with the government the food aid should bear no identifying markings other than the words "Caritas" or "CRS."

Referring to the part of the cargo rejected by authorities, Mr. Suarez told Reuters Caritas was looking into how the organisation could remove the offending lettering and still distribute this part of the aid at a later date.

Granma said that some 23 tonnes of rice, beans and canned milk would now be distributed, while the remaining seven tonnes would be handed back. It added that Cuba would never accept "an assault on its dignity," however adverse its circumstances.

Father Thomas Wenski, an official of the Miami Diocese who accompanied the cargo to Cuba, said earlier this week delays in sending the food to the provinces appeared due partly to slogans written on the cargo and also because the milk component of the cargo came in many varieties, such as canned milk, powdered milk and so on, and had to be classified by authorities.

Cuban authorities had made clear before the aid was sent that they would not accept political slogans on packages.

Clinton laments division; Dole hammers on ethics

WASHINGTON (R) — With just three days to go until Tuesday's election, President Bill Clinton Saturday accused Republicans of divisive politics but Bob Dole, predicting a victory, continued to hammer at Mr. Clinton's ethics.

"We've had literally a scandal a week in this administration the past several weeks," Sen. Dole said in Indianapolis. "I think the American people are starting to say 'what's going on there. What's going on in this White House?'"

Sen. Dole, buoyed by new polls showing him narrowing the gap to Mr. Clinton, stayed with attacks on Mr. Clinton's ethics in the second day of his round-the-clock campaign push for the White House.

"There is something happening across America... I think we're going to win this race," a still-fired-up Dole told supporters in Omaha, Nebraska, at the day's seventh campaign appearance in as many states.

"If he's reelected he's going to spend half of his time next year with investigations... Who knows what will happen in the next 24 months, 36 months," Sen.

Dole said. Mr. Clinton countered at a speech at the Alamo in San Antonio by accusing Republicans of divisive politics.

Mr. Clinton made the campaign stop at the Alamo to try to win over normally Republican Texas despite a local poll showing he was trailing 47-42 in voter support there.

Later he paid a nostalgic visit to his old hometown, Little Rock, Arkansas, lamenting the Republican's strategy.

"I really don't like a lot of what's happened in politics in the last several years. I don't like the fact that especially when it gets down toward the end and people get desperate, they think the only thing to do is try to convince you their opponent is no good," Mr. Clinton said.

"We ought to get away from this idea that we have to demonise our opponent in order to clarify our differences," he said. "But don't worry about me — every time I get down, I remember what Mark Twain said about a dog. Mark Twain said every dog ought to have a few fleas."

Sen. Dole picked up de-

cided voters and narrowed Mr. Clinton's lead in the final days of the campaign, two new polls showed.

Sen. Dole lagged Mr. Clinton by only 3.8 per cent in a Reuters/Zogby daily tracking poll. Mr. Clinton was favoured by 42.4 per cent and Sen. Dole 38.6 per cent of 1,200 likely voters polled by John Zogby Group International between Wednesday and Friday. The poll had a 3 percentage point margin of error.

Mr. Clinton's lead narrowed to 13 per cent in a CNN/USA Today/ Gallup poll, which gave the president 50 per cent of the vote to Sen. Dole's 37 per cent. Mr. Clinton had an 18-point lead Friday.

Reform Party candidate Ross Perot was far behind in third but White House officials hoped the third party candidate would not cut into Mr. Clinton's margin so much that the president would be denied a majority of the popular vote.

Mr. Perot attacked Mr. Clinton for ethical lapses, corrupt campaign financing and a lax attitude toward illegal drug use during a speech in a working class

suburb south of Detroit.

"I promise you this if you elect me as your president I will put a sign up that this White House is not for sale at any price, at any time," Mr. Perot told about 900 supporters.

White House political director Doug Sosnick, travelling with Mr. Clinton in Texas, said undecided voters were finally making a choice in the final days before the election and he was not surprised that Mr. Clinton was getting few of them.

By late afternoon, Sen. Dole's face had begun to look slightly drawn, and his voice slowed. But he bounced back at the evening rally at the Omaha Airport, with a stump speech dotted with wisecracks.

Sen. Dole started the day with a chat at an all-night coffee shop in New Jersey and went on to breakfast with retired Gen. Colin Powell outside of Philadelphia.

"It's a race... that is winnable and he's going to win it," Gen. Powell, who was chairman of the military Joint Chiefs of Staff, told a crowd of several hundred at a restaurant along the Delaware River.

U.S. heart surgeon flies to Moscow for Yeltsin surgery

MOSCOW (R) — U.S. heart surgery expert Michael DeBakey returns to Moscow Sunday to advise doctors preparing to operate on President Boris Yeltsin, said by his wife to have "optimism in his eyes" about his imminent surgery.

Dr. DeBakey, 88, said before leaving Houston Saturday the heart bypass surgery, a procedure he pioneered in 1964, was expected "early next week", but he could not be more specific because of restrictions imposed by Russian officials.

He said he and three other Houston-based medical experts were due to serve only as consultants for the operation, which would involve multiple bypass surgery to improve bloodflow to Mr. Yeltsin's heart.

"We're not going to be a part of the operation. The Russian team is doing the operation, always has been. We're consultants," he said.

Russian Cardiologist Renat Akhurin, who trained under Dr. DeBakey at Houston's Baylor College of Medicine, would perform the operation, Dr. DeBakey said.

Officials at the Methodist Hospital in Houston said Dr. DeBakey would be accompanied to Moscow by pathologist David Yawn, haematologist Clarence Alfrey and cardiovascular surgeon George Noon.

Mr. Yeltsin's wife Naina said in a television interview that her 65-year-old husband was cracking jokes with his doctors.

Speaking to ORT television at the Barvikha Sanatorium where Mr. Yeltsin is preparing for the operation, she said the rest of the family were more nervous than Mr. Yeltsin himself.

"Of course he is worried, but he is outwardly calm. He has a good contact with his doctors. I hear humour and jokes," she said, adding that Mr. Yeltsin was receiving lots of letters of support and many people were suggesting folk remedies.

"He has optimism in his eyes. As always when he has decided something he believes it will turn out all right," she said.

But she said the family were keeping

from him news reports "which we think he should not see." She gave as an example newspaper attacks on his daughter Tatyana accusing her of bringing documents for her father to sign.

Dr. DeBakey has said Mr. Yeltsin has been treated for anaemia and thyroid problems and now appeared to be ready for surgery. He examined Mr. Yeltsin in late September and predicted a full recovery for the president, but recommended that he rest for at least six weeks before the operation.

German Chancellor Helmut Kohl, the western leader closest to Mr. Yeltsin, made a brief stopover in Moscow Saturday for talks with Russian Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin and passed on his good wishes.

"In these coming days we wish Boris Yeltsin all the best," Mr. Kohl told journalists after meeting Mr. Chernomyrdin for an hour at Vnukovo Airport.

"I hope the president will return (to work) soon and refreshed," Mr. Kohl said. He indicated no major decision on NATO enlargement — a sore point for Moscow — would be taken until the Russian president was back in action.

Mr. Chernomyrdin, who will stand in for Mr. Yeltsin during the operation, received personal praise from Mr. Kohl, who said: "These are by no means easy times and it is important that you are here to act with a sense of duty and responsibility."

Mr. Yeltsin's health is a subject of serious concern for western governments and for investors worried about political stability. His illness has been accompanied by infighting in Moscow and charges from the opposition that the country is being run in his name by his Chief of Staff Anatoly Chubais.

But Kremlin spokesman Sergei Yastrebinsky stressed in a radio interview Saturday that Mr. Yeltsin was personally studying and signing all the decrees issued over his signature.

Japan food poisoning official commits suicide

TOKYO (R) — An official in charge of school lunches in the western Japanese city which was the centre of a killer food poisoning outbreak this year has committed suicide, police reported Sunday.

A police spokesman told reporters in Sakai that the body of Shigeki Morimoto, 61, managing director of the Sakai School Lunch Program Association, was found in a pond in Sakai Saturday afternoon.

He was believed to have deliberately drowned himself.

"Morimoto is believed to have killed himself because his family said he had been worried about his job and because a note left at his home made reference to his 'regrets'," the spokesman said.

Morimoto died one day after Sakai authorities officially declared the months-long epidemic over.

The outbreak, which started in the city last July and spread to other parts of the country, has so far killed 11 people, mainly schoolchildren, and made 9,500 ill.

Victims came down with vomiting, diarrhoea and dehydration.

In a possible new O-157 coli bacillus outbreak, more than 100 children at a kindergarten in northern Japan are believed to have been infected by the killer germ, officials said Friday.

Children from the Aoi-Nishi Kindergarten in Obihiro city in Hokkaido prefecture began complaining last week of symptoms linked to the O-157 Coli Bacillus, and 23 children diagnosed as carrying the germ are in hospital, health officials said.

Since last week's outbreak, a total of 180 people, including 120 children, have reported symptoms typical of the O-157 germ, including severe diarrhoea and vomiting.

But not all have been diagnosed as carrying the killer germ and "some may merely be reporting a flu", one official said.

Health authorities believe school lunches prepared centrally in Sakai for distribution throughout the city, about 480 kilometres west of Tokyo, were the cause of the outbreak last July.



A Zairean man carries a refrigerator on his head, after he looted a store in a deserted Goma street. Rwandan troops attacked the east Zaire city of Goma Saturday and the fighting forced many residents to flee their homes and businesses which have been invaded by looters (Reuter photo)

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Challenge before MENA

EGYPT IS stepping up preparations to hold the third Middle East and North Africa (MENA) economic conference between Nov. 12 and 14 despite the serious setbacks that have beset the peace process in recent months. Some 3,000 delegates are expected to attend the conference representing no less than 80 countries. Judging by the record number of participants, the conference might be billed a success before it begins. But the reality might be different since agendas differ, depending on what various countries want to achieve for themselves from the gathering.

The two previous MENA conferences, held respectively in Casablanca and Amman in 1994 and 1995, achieved little practical results as most, if not all, of the mega-projects proposed then remained no more than blueprints for the future. What might be different this time, is difficult to say. But is it that we can expect from MENA III when the first two passed only as a for white elephant projects?

A recent U.N. study shows that the Palestinian economy has experienced a severe slowdown during the past several years particularly since the holding of the Casablanca conference. The Palestinian gross national product (GNP), according to the study, has dropped 23 per cent over the previous four years, with the biggest fall occurring over the past two years alone. GNP per capita income among the Palestinians has accordingly fallen by 39 per cent between 1992 and 1996 with, again, the greatest drop taking place during the last two years.

When these alarming figures are examined in conjunction with the fact that unemployment among the Palestinians rose from 10 per cent four years ago to a whopping 30 per cent this year, the picture that emerges is a gloomy one. It suggests that the projected economic dividends from the peace process are nowhere in sight, to put it mildly.

The situation for the average Jordanian did not fare much better either. According to a recent study undertaken by a noted economist, the standard of living in Jordan has dropped 50 per cent over the past 10 years, with 13 per cent of the drop happening since 1992.

Against this backdrop, the upcoming MENA conference has a real battle to fight not only for translating into practice projects on paper but also for addressing fast deteriorating economic conditions in the area.

There is a consensus that economic development is the backbone of the peace process. Without progress on the economic front, therefore, the political achievements made thus far will indeed be in serious jeopardy. This places a heavier burden on Cairo's MENA. If it does not do well, the MENA series might as well recede into oblivion.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

THE CONTINUED closure of the Palestinian lands is harming not only the Palestinian people's interests but also those of Jordan, socially and economically, and driving people to despair, said Sultan Al Hatab, a writer for Al Rai Sunday. The majority of Jordanians and of course the Palestinians are asking about the kind of peace with Israel and believe the situation now is far worse than that which prevailed before the start of the peace process in 1991, said the writer. The closure, which started last February, is ruining the Palestinian economy, causing suffering to the majority of people and frustrating those on the two sides of the River Jordan who had bet on peace and dreamed of a better life. Only to end up with a mirage, continued the writer. The Arab countries should realise that Israel is escalating violence against the Palestinians under the pretext of ensuring security for the Israeli society and that through torturing the Palestinians and starving them, it hopes to drive them out from what remains of their homeland, said the writer. He expressed fear that even if the Arabs continue to endure the hardships and refrain from committing a major resistance act, like planting explosives in Israel, the Israeli government and the extremists might do it for them to give themselves an excuse to carry out genocide against the Palestinian population.

UNLESS ISRAEL commits itself totally and sincerely to implementing the peace accords it had signed with the Arabs and resolves its problems with Syria and Lebanon, it is bound to face partition into three entities under a confederation, according to Mohammad Subeidi, a writer for Al Dustour. In light of the practices of the terrorist extremists and those of the Likud Party, Israel could be split up into three entities: the extremist religious entity, the secular and western-oriented group and the Arab Palestinian camp, predicted the writer. He said history tells us that all nations and empires began to disintegrate when internal divisions emerged and not when confronted by a common enemy. He expressed belief that the course of events is driving Israel into an inevitable split of its society. The Israeli government refuses to benefit from the lessons of history and adamantly refuses to respect and honour the accords it had signed with the Palestinians and is acting against the will of the secular groups and the peace movement inside the Israeli society and the Palestinian Arabs, the writer continued. He said the only element in the Israeli camp opposing the Israeli group is the military institution, but it remains to be seen whether or not this establishment will be able to maintain its grip for long.

Economic Review

By Dr. Yusuf Mansur

Globalising the financial sector helps achieve competitiveness

THE CENTRAL Bank of Jordan (CBJ) issued last week a new regulation decreasing the percentage of mandatory foreign deposits that banks operating in Jordan must hold with the Central Bank from 35 per cent to 14 per cent. This resulted in an increased amount of foreign currency loanable deposits in Jordan's twenty one banks and made the bold and timely statement that the CBJ has sufficient foreign deposits.

Feelings in the banking community are mixed because while the move seems to free more foreign deposits, it promises that the deposits kept with the Central Bank will not earn the usual 3 per cent the bank used to pay on the 35 per cent of the past. Therefore, the banks stand to lose on every 100 dollars of foreign deposits an interest revenue of 42 cents (3 per cent times \$14). Some bankers claimed that the loss would cause them to face an uneasy situation regarding loans extended in foreign currency.

However, bankers seem to have failed to calculate the gain/loss achieved from this policy which freed 21 per cent of their reserves on which the Central Bank only paid 3 per cent in interest in the past. A simple calculation demonstrates the simple math involved. Jordanian banks used to pay 5 per cent on foreign deposit accounts; therefore, by keeping 35 per cent of the deposits at 3 per cent with the Central Bank, they were forsaking the opportunity to earn 2 per cent of interest on 35 per cent of their total deposits. In other words, banks were losing the opportunity to earn 70 cents on every 100 dollars. Because the banks, now, can lend an additional 21 per cent of their deposits, they gain the opportunity to lend at the market rate of 5 per cent and acquire an additional 2 per cent on 21 per cent of their foreign deposits. Thus, the banks stand to gain 42 cents on every 100 dollars. The banks' net loss, due to the new deposit policy, is the difference between what they have lost (42 cents) and what they have gained (42 cents) which is zero.

The new policy, while not as harmful as some would like us to believe, is beneficial to a country whose 40 per cent of all deposits in the banking system are in foreign currency, of which only 8 per cent end up as local loans. It is beneficial because it very subtly encourages Jordanians to maintain their accounts in Jordanian dinars, earning an interest rate of 10 per cent, almost

double the interest rate earned on dollar accounts, and, at the same time, encourages banks to do the same. Such a high percentage rate has proven necessary for keeping the inflation rate down (the dinar exchange rate is presently beyond reproach) which looms strong in the face of a strong economic growth rate and present economic policies which substitute food subsidies with cash transfers, thus leading to increases in the amount of disposable currency in people's hands and causing inflation to increase.

Additionally, a few months ago, some Jordanian banks cautioned their depositors to be careful and deposit some of their money in dollars instead of dinars, which stirred the rumour that the dinar was collapsing. The rumour proved to be a great bonanza to banks as they paid 5 per cent on the foreign deposit accounts and loaned dinar accounts at 10 per cent. Meanwhile, banks pocketed an easy 5 per cent on their deposits with no harm done — well, almost. The dinar could have suffered tremendously, had the CBJ been weak and unable to meet the increase in demand on foreign accounts. So overall, the present penalty, if it can be called a penalty, imposed on carrying foreign reserves has not hit an impoverished market.

Most importantly, the new policy makes it more costly for lazy and idle banks which want to continue trading as in yesterday's by looking for the traditional borrower and the traditional shallow investment. The financial market needs more than a facelift; it needs an overhaul if it is to become more sophisticated as some of the banking industry experts have suggested. The tools that have been taught to all of us at the different business schools have to play in the financial market if it is to deepen, and the new, highly skilled technicians whose skills and training are so far being squandered must replace the old guard as new investment strategies and techniques become the name of the game.

Protecting our financial markets will not stand in the face of the globalisation trend that is overtaking the whole world. Globalising the financial sector helps improve the sophistication of Jordanian banks and reorient the role of the capital provider in order for Jordan to achieve that hardy diamond of success they call the "competitiveness of a nation."

'The best way to stay competitive in the global economy is to go multi-cultural'

By Gwynne Dyer

"MY FEAR is that if we keep going the way that we're going, as my mother has said for many years, the yellow peril will rule the world, because they have a different culture and a different way of life. In some of those countries, they don't believe in democracy."

Pauline Hanson is not the only white Australian who has ever said something as stupid as that. But she happens to be an elected member of the Australian parliament, and what she says has been getting nationwide publicity since she called for an end to Asian immigration to Australia two months ago. In fact, a recent opinion poll in the "Sydney Morning Herald" reported that 48 per cent of Australians agree with her.

The world is full of rednecks, and Australia is not more racist than France or Argentina or Japan. What makes it different is that it takes in 100,000 immigrants a year, though it only has a total population of 18 million — and, in recent years, one-third of the immigrants have been Asian.

The people in the big cities where the immigrants actually settle have adjusted quite well, but Australia's changing demography bothers the hell out of some people in small towns and rural areas like Pauline Hanson, who owns a fish-and-chip shop in the Queensland town of Ipswich. What really upsets them is that big-city Australia is becoming a multi-cultural, very complicated place where they no longer feel at home.

What Hanson and her friends do not realise is that this is no accident. It is deliberate government policy. Australia is one of a handful of "mature" industrial countries that have figured out that the best way to stay competitive in the 21st century global economy is to go multi-cultural.

Already, the older industrial countries can no longer compete internationally in textiles, the metal-bashing industries, and other relatively low-wage, repetitive activities. The newly industrialising countries are nipping at their heels in a lot of other economic sectors too. However, the global market is wide open for countries that can provide the best services, the best software, the best entertainment — all the job-rich, well-paying sectors where innovation is the key to success.

But how can you plan for innovation on a systematic basis? Well, the best way is to ensure that every imaginable approach to the task in hand, every perspective and traditional and cultural quirk that exists anywhere in the world, is available to you in your own language, in your own country. Cultural diversity is one of the most important new keys to success in the global economy. So throw your doors open to immigrants from everywhere on the planet, wait a few decades, and reap the benefits in exports, in jobs, in national income.

The unchallenged market leader in this strategy is Canada, which has utterly transformed its demography since it dropped its old, racist immigration policy in 1967. At that time its people were 99 per cent European by descent.

As in Canada (and even in the United States, a lesser player in the game), those Australian politicians and bureaucrats who understand why ethnic diversification is a vital economic strategy seem to

mostly from Britain or France. By the year 2001, almost 18 per cent of Canada's population will be "visible minorities," and in big cities like Toronto and Vancouver the proportion will be 40 per cent or higher.

Australia does not lag far behind Canada in the scale of immigration: both countries have populations that are around 20 per cent foreign-born. (By comparison, Britain and the United States have 7 and 8 per cent foreign-born respectively, while China, India and Japan all have well under 1 per cent.)

Australia lags farther behind in the sheer scale and diversity of its non-European immigration. Two-thirds of Canada's immigrants come from Asia, Latin America, Africa and the Middle East, compared to only one-third of Australia's. Indeed, Australia's "visible minorities" are hardly more than 5 per cent of the population yet. But the strategy is the same — and nowhere more similar than in the two governments' determination to do good by stealth.

No Australian politician of note has ever stood up and said that the country is importing immigrants from all over the world because that strategy of ethnic diversity will give Australia a vital competitive edge (plus citizens with relatives in all its best markets) in the world economy in the next century.

As in Canada (and even in the United States, a lesser player in the game), those Australian politicians and bureaucrats who understand why ethnic diversification is a vital economic strategy seem to

think that the best strategy is silence. Let the magic do its work, but do not talk about it in front of the children. They will just get cross and spoil it all.

It is the wrong strategy. Even rednecks can add. If nobody says out loud that the Australian government is deliberately aiming to create a multi-racial, multi-cultural society as the best guarantee of every Australian's future prosperity, then the field is left open to the Pauline Hansons, who will take the same demographic trends and flaunt them as harbingers of disaster.

All the major political parties in Australia support a non-racial immigration policy, and senior people in them understand that this is one of those rare and happy cases where morality and self-interest coincide. But their determination to pursue the policy without explaining it — mainly because they do not trust the voters' intelligence — is paternalistic, stupid and destructive.

Does the policy work? Well, it certainly does not hurt: Canada and Australia, with 20 per cent foreign-born, have unemployment rates no worse than France or Germany, with only 5 per cent foreign-born. And though it is early yet for conclusive evidence, Canada, a country of only 30 million, overtook Britain last year to become the world's second-largest exporter of television programming.

If they told the truth about what they were doing, and why, they might actually persuade people to support the policy.

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Resolutions on Iraq should affect only the 'guilty'

By Waleed M. Sadi

PRESIDENT JACQUES Chirac told Parliament during his visit to Jordan two weeks ago what all sensible and fair minded people have been saying all along, namely, that the Iraqi people should not have to pay for the devastating errors of their rulers. The judgement of the French President is particularly true because there is no operational democracy in Iraq and there has never been one as far back as one can remember.

In the absence of an elected government, the people cannot be held responsible for the action or inaction of their rulers. Hence the "ruling" by Paris that even when the international community decides to punish the Iraqi regime for invading and occupying another country, the Iraqi people must remain immune from any such penalty.

This line of thinking takes us straight to the heart of the matter and touches upon the United Nations jurisprudence on applying sanctions against any country found guilty of a major wrongdoing against international law, the Charter of the U.N. or its resolutions.

Until now, the U.N. Security Council, which is the principal U.N. organ that adopts punitive measures against a certain country, does so without bearing in the mind the distinction between ruler and the governed. There is no better way to illustrate this anachronism in the Council's jurisprudence than the case of Iraq where millions of Iraqis have been made to suffer for over six years now for the grave mistakes of their rulers in Baghdad. This indiscriminate incrimination is defensible on all counts. No one in his right mind, including the capitals which are most determined to maintain crippling sanctions against Iraq, can truly and fairly defend the indiscriminate application of sanctions against the innocent as well as the guilty.

I suggest that even the Security Council resolution that endorsed the food-for-oil principle as a humanitarian gesture to ease the pressure on the innocent Iraqi people does not remedy the anomalies created by the Council resolutions against the Iraqi people at large.

The Iraqis' normal needs go beyond food and medicines, which Resolution 798 aims to address. The Iraqis are not a sub-human species whose needs do not go beyond basic commodities of life. If all fair-minded people agree that the Iraqi people are innocent and must not be made to pay for the consequential errors of President Saddam Hussein, then the international community must devise another formula for punishing the "guilty" without harming the innocent.

I propose that the sanc-

tions mechanism needs to be better articulated and refined so that innocent parties are not punished with the culprits. There are all sorts of ways available to the international community to punish the Iraqi regime without harming the people in the process.

Let us take the Iraqi case, for example. The Security Council had many meaningful options to adopt against the ruling regime, without penalising the people as well. On the political level, countries may suspend or break diplomatic relations. A country's membership in international organisations can also be suspended. Iraqi means of transportation can be denied permission to call on foreign countries. The country can be also denied access to arms.

Isolation in every conceivable way would be an effective measure until there is a change at the political level that meets the requirements of the international community. The main thing to remember here is to apply sanctions on the government alone. In the case of Iraq, there can be no doubt that the six-year-old economic embargo has taken a heavy toll on the people more than on the regime. The ruling people in Baghdad have not suffered at all from the sanctions applied against their country. They continue to lead a normal life and all their economic needs are secured down to the finest detail. So who is punished, by the international community's current stance on Iraq? If the intent here is to drive the people into a rebellion, then the major capitals are completely wrong to believe it will happen, as proven time and again over the past six years or so.

In this vein, I submit therefore, that even the oil-for-food deal is not commensurate with the needs of the Iraqi people. The Security Council should reconsider its tactics against Iraq by amending or even rescinding its measures against Baghdad so that they may be directed against the people who can be held responsible for the mess in which the country finds itself.

That is why the thinking of President Chirac is more than defensible. And that is why Paris should take the initiative to change the course of the Council on Iraq, so that the innocent are no longer obligated to bear the consequences of actions made by others. President Chirac has upheld this new posture on the Iraqi people, so why not translate it into a meaningful expression by calling for a review of the resolutions on Iraq that apply collective punishment.

Barriers still blocking road to rights in Thailand, say critics

By Sue Montgomery

THREE YEARS after the government promised to make human rights a priority, a bill to set up Thailand's first human rights commission has been presented to cabinet.

But instead of rejecting, non-government organisations (NGOs) say it is unacceptable because the new commission would not be independent. It would be chaired by the prime minister, with the attorney-general as secretary. "Governments — even democratically elected ones — are not good at monitoring themselves in terms of their respect for human rights," says Brian Burdick, special adviser on national institutions to the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.

To be credible, such a body must be autonomous and run by people of integrity and independence, he says. "If you don't have that, frankly, you have wasted your time and money," Mr. Burdick says. "It doesn't matter how good the law is. Unless the people responsible for the conduct of the commission's activities are people of independence and integrity, the commission won't be successful."

"It won't enjoy respect and support, and people won't come to it with their concerns and complaints about human rights abuses," he says. "That's how we've seen their share of brutal suppression. Dozens of pro-democracy activists were killed by security forces in October 1976 at Thammasat University and again in May 1992 in central Bangkok. Twenty years after the Thammasat massacre, there has been no enquiry, even though the bodies were captured on film."

More recently, as Thailand's economic development races ahead, people increasingly find their rights to land, resources and a clean environment in

jeopardy. This makes the need for an independent commission urgent, says lawyer Somchai Homsai, chairman of the Union for Civil Liberties of Thailand.

"They don't understand their rights, but they know that the existing system doesn't protect them," he continues. "They need something to solve their problems, but they may not know what this is. Even the government knows this is urgent, otherwise people will stage demonstrations in front of parliament every two months or something."

This is already happening. A group called the Forum of the Poor, a loose grouping of students, academics, needy people, members of NGOs and business people supporting social justice, was set up last December. It has staged three major demonstrations in front of parliament to bring attention to problems caused by their construction, poor working conditions, and development schemes. So far, their complaints have fallen on deaf ears.

Meanwhile, there have been disturbing cases recently of community activists being murdered and people being threatened or harassed for taking part in protests against development projects. The victims have no impartial body to turn to that could investigate.

Thailand declared at an international conference in Vienna in 1993 that it would give priority to creating or strengthening national institutions for the protection of human rights.

Since then, the road to establishing a commission has been hindered by barriers — not least the frequent changes in government. The most recent

commission, says establishing an independent body should be a priority after the poll.

Burdick, who is involved in helping at least seven countries — including Thailand — at various stages of setting up commissions, points to a government trend across south and South-East Asia to set up independent rights bodies.

"That is why we have seen commissions set up in India and Indonesia," he says. "This isn't a success when two of the world's most populous countries — and two countries who have a pretty healthy regard for their own independence — set up human rights commissions."

The Philippines also has a commission, the Sri Lankan government has recently passed laws to set up one, and Bangladesh, Malaysia, Nepal and Pakistan are all interested in following suit.

The trend, says Burdick, stems from governments realising that respect for human rights can affect regional security. Rights abuses in one country, for example, often translate into a refugee problem for another.

Rights commissions can act as a preventive measure in dealing with conflicts before they flare out of control, such as in the Balkans, says Burdick. Australia's former human rights commissioner.

"The international community is hopeless at picking up the pieces and sticking them back together again," he says. "We can put in peacekeepers or election monitors, but we can't put communities back together once they've started abusing each other's rights and killing each other."

Such a healing process "takes generations. What we have to understand is that if we are serious about human rights, we have to get on at the front of the equation."

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Features

Pakistani lawyer leading the battle against 'forces of darkness'

By Yasmin Alihai Brown



Asma Jahangir

MEETING ASMA Jahangir for the first time is a disconcerting experience. The head of Pakistan's Human Rights Commission and a lawyer of international reputation, she has none of the formality or reserve you would expect. A warm, petite woman, she sat legs crossed on the settee, in her plain cotton clothes, munching eagerly into a kebab roll, when she was in London earlier last month to deliver the prestigious John Foster Memorial Lecture to honour those promoting the cause of human rights. She offered me tea several times, asked if I would like to share her kebab and chatted about her life and work as if we were old friends.

Then she struck. Looking directly into my face, her eyes ablaze, she asked: "What have you women done about Afghanistan? Don't you think you should do something?"

Kabul was once a cosmopolitan city, famous for its highly educated and militantly independent women. But the only public demonstrations so far against the barbaric regime imposed on women by the Taliban militia since their capture of the city on Sept. 27 have been

organised by Muslim women next door in Pakistan, where they are fighting their own battles against the forces of darkness. Asma is one of those leading the protests.

She comes from the northern city of Lahore, a place of growing religious fanaticism. Kabul is hardly any distance away. Arms, drugs and ideas have been flowing freely between the two cities for years. "It feels," she says, "like we are in this unending descent into anarchy and decay. We have no law and order, no rights and, as the extremists gain control as always, the women and children are paying the price. And it

isn't just something that affects us out there — it will have an impact on Muslim women living here and elsewhere."

In the same week that the Taliban succeeded in their onslaught, a High Court in Lahore ruled that an adult Muslim woman could not get married without the consent of her male guardian. Women who chose their husbands independently can now be forced to annul their marriages and the repercussions are already being felt. "Hundreds have already been arrested," Asma says. "This is simply going to open up the floodgates for the harassment of women

and girls by their families and the authorities. The courts have sanctioned their oppression. Thousands more are bound to be affected by this."

This includes the British Muslim girls, mainly in families from rural areas, who are taken off to Pakistan and coerced into marriage. In May, 18-year-old Shazia Shaheen fled screaming from Manchester Airport when she realised her parents were taking her to Pakistan to be married under the pretence of taking her on holiday. Earlier, 19-year-old Naheda Begum went through the same experience. In April, 14-year-old Nazia Haq returned to this country after being married off to a 40-year-old man who raped and abused her.

Unless the ruling is reversed, says Asma, "these parents will now have the full protection of Pakistani law. There is a ripple effect which touches many lives far beyond the subcontinent."

"These militants are doing great disservice to the name and spirit of Islam. They know that an aggressive use of the religious card can bring them power. The Koran forbids coerced marriages and asks men and women to seek knowledge.

This aggressively misogynist Islam has little in common with the origins of the creed."

Asma wants the world to understand that these traditions have, through the ages, been kept up in spite of the militants. "Like the women in my family, I was educated entirely in Pakistan. We have always had incredibly successful Muslim women lawyers, doctors, journalists, entrepreneurs and, of course, politicians like Benazir Bhutto."

But life is getting harder for them. She is defending a 22-year-old woman, Saima Waheed, whose father wants the courts to declare her marriage illegal because she chose her own husband. If Asma wins, the precedent just set can be reversed and her opponents know it: "They have done everything to intimidate me, to destroy my reputation. In their newspapers, they say I am a Western agent who makes blue films in underground laboratories. They have even turned on my two young daughters. They splashed their pictures across the pages and said they were having a bad influence on young girls. I have had to send them out of the country. Sometimes you have to pay such an unbearable price for what

you believe in." Her husband, a businessman, has also been a target because he is a member of the Ahmed Muslim sect which has been persecuted in Iran, Saudi Arabia and Pakistan for the past 10 years.

"What they hate about me is that I am a part of the Women's Action Forum — an organisation which fights for women's rights. And I use the courts to get them justice. I run the largest legal aid centre in this country. Then last year we had that case of the young Christian boy and his uncle facing the death penalty for blasphemy. I got them acquitted. Soon after, this gang of armed men came into my brother's house. I live next door to him and they were just going to do the lot of us." A neighbour alerted the police just in time.

Defiance and political non-conformism is in Asma Jahangir's blood. Her father, Malik Gulam Jilani, was a member of the opposition in the seventies. Long spells in prison came with the job. Her sister, Hina, is also a human rights lawyer. Both sisters were imprisoned for sedition for supporting the rights of women to give evidence in court.

Asma is dismissive about her personal heroism: "I'm

only one of so many women in the forum and elsewhere, especially in the villages. I am not special." Little wonder, then, that she has refused all offers to become Pakistan's first female judge: "I couldn't have done as much as I can as a lawyer and an activist. I can't see myself as part of the establishment, can you? Anyway they would find me impossible. Even within the Bar Association, which generally has been very supportive, there is a coterie of extremist lawyers who would love to see me dead."

"The important thing to understand is that there is now a solid, highly organised, ruthless network of zealots. These orthodox lawyers, judges and others play like a team and that is how they are gaining influence. They are possessed with a hatred of all progressive women and of democratic values."

How can this be happening in a country with a female prime minister? "She is first a politician and then a woman. Remember she is the buffer between the extremists and women. Though she has not repealed any of the draconian laws that Zia put through, she has helped to halt the slide backward. But

she won't hurt her personal ambitions." She points out that Benazir lacks judgement and courage when confronted with men — like her corrupt husband — who fouled up her life: "This does strike you. She seems so uncritical of those close to her."

At this point Asma appeared tense, on alert for anything which implied criticism of her country. She reminded me that Pakistan is now a democracy, where a woman was elected, and that, unlike most other countries, middle-class Pakistanis are actively involved in the struggle for equal rights.

"What we have to do, all of us, is to recognise and support the moderate and liberal Muslim majority in these Islamic countries before the militant few totally succeed in poisoning minds and take over. Already in Afghanistan women and liberals are beginning their resistance. They need to be supported by the international community. The same in Pakistan, especially at this point when the strength of the liberals is diminishing."

Asma is now back in Lahore to fight for Saima Waheed in court. Her strength, it seems, is in no danger of diminishing. Yet.

Robotics consortium turning ideas into machines

By Casey Combs
The Associated Press

PITTSBURGH — Where others see a post-industrial wasteland of old brick warehouses and rusting foundries along the Allegheny River, robotics researchers envision "robo city."

The NASA-funded Robotics Engineering Consortium, which sticks out like a shiny thumb at the foot of a hill crammed with run-down row houses, is the only centre in the world devoted to turning robotic ideas into practical machines by forming partnerships with companies.

"These field robots will revolutionise industry after industry," National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) administrator Dan Goldin said at the consortium's recent opening.

Companies such as Boeing, Caterpillar and Ford, which already are paying for the first robots, and other spin-off corporations likely will take over the nearby vacant buildings and lots, according to Dave Pahnos, director of the consortium.

Robo city would create hundreds of thousands of jobs and keep the United States in control of cutting-edge machinery, he said.

Consortium engineers can make "any piece of mobile equipment intelligent and autonomous" with "nobody on a joystick — no human," Mr.

Pahnos said. Previously, robots were confined to laboratories at a handful of universities, including Carnegie Mellon in Pittsburgh. The Robotics Institute there conceived the consortium two years ago and started it with a \$2.5 million grant from NASA.

"In some ways the nation has played small in robotics," said William "Red" Whittaker, chief scientist at the consortium. "We haven't really hunted big game."

NASA uses some intelligent machines to perform tasks in space, but most are made in Canada. Mr. Whittaker said. Mr. Goldin said nine out of 10 robots are built in other countries.

The consortium wants to change that by building and testing robots at the 98-year-old bronze foundry which has been renovated for its headquarters just north of downtown. The assembly area is larger than a football field and three stories high.

"The people in (the Pittsburgh neighbourhood of) Lawrenceville have no idea what's going on here," said Carl Loeffler, a former art professor who is research director for the consortium's virtual reality laboratory. "They think we're conducting experiments on aliens from outer space."

Someday, that's just what the robots being developed at the consortium could do.

At the recent opening, a dune-buggy-like "lunar rover" used on-board sensing equipment to drive itself around the concrete floor and videotape guests.

Lunacorp in Virginia plans to test the rover in deserts before launching it to the moon in 2000 with NASA's help. The company expects to make money by letting regular people operate the rover at amusement parks on earth.

Other projects, while less glamorous, mean radical changes in heavy equipment.

They include an excavator for Caterpillar, a fork truck for Ford and an off-road vehicle for Boeing. The agriculture, mining and cargo handling industries each has about a \$2 billion market potential, Mr. Pahnos said.

A computer-driven harvester for new holland north America is expected to be ready for farmers by next fall at a price just slightly higher than mechanical machines.

It uses the satellite-based global positioning system, wheel sensors and a video camera to "see" a crop line so it can harvest a field without a driver or a remote operator, said Kerien Fitzpatrick, associate director of the consortium.

The harvester is faster and more responsive than a human driver can be, but it comes equipped with a

cab so that farmers can drive it themselves until they ease into the idea of letting a computer do the work, he said.

"It's kind of spooky driving next to this," Mr. Fitzpatrick said.

NASA plans to spend \$4.5 million annually for at least three years to lend its space robotics know-how to the consortium's earth-based projects.

But robots aren't just on the horizon for heavy equipment.

Robotic tools are already being developed in conjunction with virtual reality computing to help surgeons perform delicate eye surgery, said Dave Lavery, NASA's telecommunications programme manager.

They soon will be used to look for life on Mars, to maintain and dismantle nuclear plants and to help children pass a test for a bicycle safety license, among other projects, Mr. Loeffler said.

Someday, robots could be used, for example, to clean up homes and cook food for elderly people who would otherwise have to live in nursing homes, Mr. Lavery said.

Consortium researchers expect most of the ideas will be transformed into real machines at their riverbank robo city.

"There's nothing like it anywhere on this planet," Mr. Loeffler said.

Traders vie over profit and loss of disaster

Market forces have been adopted in many fields around the world to boost competition and efficiency, cut costs and stimulate trade. Humanitarian relief is no exception and a ground-breaking business fair in Geneva has sought to exploit commercialism to stretch aid money.

By Jo-Anne Velin

THE RELIEF of human suffering has become big global business — and looks set to scale a new heights.

The value of goods and services consumed by disaster victims and other emergencies in 1995 alone is estimated by international humanitarian agencies and donor governments to have reached \$8 billion — three times the figure of a decade earlier.

If one subtracts the portion consumed by peace-keeping operations and food purchases, the figure is closer to \$2 billion. That is still an impressive turnover in a niche market that consumes everything from hi-tech telecommunications to aluminium spoons, and involves a range of health and social services.

Private companies, it is being increasingly argued, can provide these requirements more efficiently and for less money than can volunteer agencies or non-government organisations.

World Aid, the first international trade fair in

this field, was staged in this Swiss city in early October. Another is planned in 1998.

It was set up by a clutch of relief agencies and supported by the United Nations, the Red Cross and Red Crescent's federation of national societies and the canton of Geneva. About 260 commercial exhibitors and 45 humanitarian organisations had their wares and services on display.

Its supporters say their objective is to stretch relief dollars by promoting competition between suppliers, and to develop new partnerships between entrepreneurs and the aid community.

World Aid was not organised to resolve the deep ethical problems that riddle international humanitarianism — despite the many seminars and workshops that took place on the sidelines — but to make the point that enhancing competition between nuns-and-bols suppliers will help the money go further all round.

Commercial competition is not new to the industry. "The market for relief items is extremely competitive," says Martin Halland, the

head of procurement at the U.N. refugee agency, UNHCR, "so we want to exploit that and to speed up the delivery time."

The UNHCR is one of the world's largest consumers of non-food relief items: most of them low-tech, such as tents, blankets, registration forms and plastic sheeting.

Each year, it spends about 10 per cent of its total budget on relief stock. This means, currently, 10 per cent of \$1.3 billion. In less than five years, its massive purchases of plastic sheeting through competitive tendering have knocked down the market price by two-thirds.

The commercial exhibitors at World Aid represented only a handful of the companies that make good money through servicing the needs of the U.N.'s bulk-buying humanitarian agencies such as the UNHCR, the World Food Programme and the UNICEF children's fund, and other humanitarian organisations.

Almost without exception, these companies are based in Europe or North America. Yet the South is where most of the natural and war-related disasters happen, where most of the 300 million people who will be affected by such emergencies this year live, and where much of the supplying business is moving. Labour is cheaper there, and many regional manufacturers can quickly move

supplies to where they are needed.

"This is not just selling — this is service," says Egyptian manufacturer Adel Gawish. "It's not just supplying and then you're finished. You have to listen to the complaints. If I produce cups and plates as thin as the UNHCR wants in its specifications, they won't last."

In four years, Gawish has produced more than 2.5 million, 17-piece aluminium kitchen sets for the refugee agency. "My sets last," he says proudly.

Emergency relief can be a strange business, involving symbiotic relationships that some might find distasteful.

Outside the exhibition hall, a giant tank-like vehicle was parked at a bus stop. It had been adapted to fit a broad drum, spiked with hundreds of massive claws designed to turn up and detonate landmines planted on roads and hard-packed surfaces.

Draped along the side was a blue flag with the logo of the company that created this \$3 million demining monster. The firm is also known as a manufacturer of anti-personnel mines — the kind that continue to kill, maim and devastate the lives of millions of civilians around the world.

Inside the exhibition hall, a prosthetics manufacturer had neatly arranged tiny plastic children's hands and feet in glass display cases.

Gemini News Service

Weizman due here Wednesday

(Continued from page 1)

be added.

President Weizman, who will fly by helicopter to Amman, is expected to land at the Royal Palace around mid-morning on Wednesday. King Hussein and President Weizman will have a closed-door meeting to be followed by expanded discussions attended by senior Jordanian officials and members of the presidential entourage, which is

not expected to include any government ministers.

The president will address a press conference at around 1 p.m. Other details of his visit were being finalised on Sunday.

President Weizman met with Palestinian President Yasser Arafat last month at his Tel Aviv home and visited Cairo and held talks with Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak shortly thereafter.

Arafat confirms bid to have Hebron deal signed in Cairo

(Continued from page 1)

Rifkind stepped full-square into the Israel-Palestinian wrangling over the future of Hebron Sunday by declaring that the city's militant Jewish settlers should leave.

"The British government believes all the Jewish settlements in the occupied territories are illegal and therefore should not continue," Mr. Rifkind declared at a press conference at the end of a surprise visit to Hebron.

Mr. Rifkind also called on Palestinians and Israelis to rapidly conclude negotiations on implementing Israel's commitment to withdraw its troops from Hebron as required by the 1995 Oslo peace accords.

"Success in these efforts will be the key that unlocks the problems of the peace

process in recent months," he said after meeting with Mayor Mustapha Natshe and other local officials.

Mr. Rifkind said he decided to include Hebron in his one-day visit to Israel to "demonstrate our solidarity with all those who are seeking the success of the negotiations that will lead to the Israeli redeployment from Hebron."

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has accused Mr. Arafat and the Palestinians of stalling in the Hebron negotiations in an effort to build international pressure on Israel to lessen its demands for changes to the Oslo accord.

Mr. Netanyahu met with U.S. Ambassador Martin Indyk on Friday to discuss the talks and according to Israeli army radio asked the

U.S. envoy to warn Mr. Arafat that a rapid deal was needed "to prevent extremists from both sides from trying to sabotage an agreement."

Right-wing Jewish radicals have vowed to prevent an army withdrawal from Hebron, while Israeli security forces were on top alert Sunday amid reports that Palestinian militants were planning a new wave of suicide bombings.

Mr. Arafat rejected the Israeli and U.S. claims that a Hebron agreement was at hand.

"Nothing has been changed," he asserted, saying the main stumbling blocks included Israeli demands to create a buffer zone around Hebron's Jewish settlement and to limit the weapons which can be carried by

Palestinian police in the city.

A U.S. spokesman said Israeli-Palestinian talks on Hebron took place over the weekend and were expected to continue on Sunday.

U.S. State Department spokesman Nicholas Burns said Friday that U.S. Middle East envoy Dennis Ross was expected to return to the region late this week to resume his efforts to wrap up the Hebron talks.

Mr. Rifkind's Hebron visit, sandwiched between talks with Mr. Netanyahu, President Ezer Weizman and Mr. Arafat, was cleared with his Israeli hosts, British officials said.

Britain sees the delayed redeployment of troops from Hebron as one of the key reasons for the build-up of Palestinian frustration at the slow progress towards peace.

But British diplomats steadfastly denied Mr. Rifkind would try to rival French President Jacques Chirac, who during a visit last week publicly turned on Israeli security men and accused them of provocation during a visit to Jerusalem's Old City and was given a hero's welcome by Palestinians. Although careful to avoid criticising Mr. Chirac's visit, Mr. Rifkind emphasised: "We are evenhanded."

He said Israel and the Palestinians should work out their own disputes and the role of the international community was to assist.

Privately, London — which wants Europe to complement rather than try to supplant the mediation efforts of the United States — is wary of Mr. Chirac's diplomatic intentions.

Qatar launches satellite TV channel

DOHA (AFP) — Qatar has launched a \$33 million satellite television channel that can be watched in the Middle East, North Africa and Europe, the station's director said Sunday. The chairman of its board of directors, Sheikh Hamad Ben Thamer Al Thani, said the station broadcasts six hours of programming a day in Arabic. One quarter of its employees are Qataris. Many of the employees used to work for BBC Arabic television, which stopped broadcasting in April to the Middle East and Africa.

JORDAN TIMES TEL.
684311 - 699634

Middle East Development Bank premature before peace — expert

KUWAIT CITY (AFP) — U.S.-backed plans to create a regional development bank in the Middle East are premature until peace is secured in the region, the head of the leading Arab development institution said Sunday.

"The Middle East Development Bank (MEDB) should have been a product of peace," Abdul Latif Al Hamad, director general of the Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development (AFESD), told AFP.

But Mr. Hamad said the failure of the peace process to move forward has undermined the "raison d'être" of the U.S.-backed MEDB being set up with the participation of some Arab states and Israel.

He also said in the interview that AFESD is setting up a \$1 billion fund to encourage private investment in infrastructure projects in the Arab World, but said this new fund is not intended as "competition" with MEDB.

Plans for MEDB were first announced at the Casablanca economic summit in November 1994 and are expected to be followed up at the latest economic conference in Cairo next week.

But MEDB has had a checkered start as most European countries and Arab Gulf states have opposed the plan, arguing that there are not enough viable projects flowing from the peace process to warrant the new bank.

The head of AFESD, whose biggest shareholders are Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, echoed the Gulf position that the first priority should be establishing a durable peace settlement.

"My feeling is, no, I can't see it helping the (peace) process. If the basic issues are not resolved, then you are not going to agree on little details," said Mr. Hamad.

The United States is the principal backer and main shareholder in the regional development bank, which will have authorized capital of \$5 billion and paid-up capital of \$1.25 billion.

The founding shareholders include the United States, Japan and Russia with the main regional partners Jordan, Egypt, the Palestinians and Israel. MEDB aims to attract more private and other funds to the Middle East by offering concessional financing to projects that encourage regional integration.

The new \$1 billion fund planned by AFESD, which could be operating by the

end of 1997, will provide cofinancing to encourage private investment in infrastructure projects in the Arab World, Mr. Hamad said.

He said AFESD is planning to inject \$500 million from its own resources into the new fund, with a matching amount expected to be raised from other sources.

AFESD already backs public and private sector projects with government guarantees throughout the Arab World, but Mr. Hamad said the new fund will provide "direct lending to the private sector" without the need for guarantees.

Kuwait-based AFESD, which had paid-up capital of more than \$2.2 billion at the end of 1995, began operations in 1974 and has some 18 member countries, all of them members of the Arab League.

Third World leaders slam unfair trade rules

HARARE (R) — Third World leaders opened a three-day trade promotion summit Sunday, accusing industrialized states of frog-marching them into internationally binding trade pacts which erode their sovereignty.

In speeches at the group of 15 meeting, Zimbabwean, Egyptian and Malaysian leaders called on the international community to implement agreed measures aimed at achieving fair world trade.

"Of concern to us is the urgency with which new issues are being forced onto the international trading agenda. This deliberate and expansive interpretation of the WTO's (World Trade Organisation's) remit needs to be checked," Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe said when he opened the (G-15) summit.

"The strong-arm tactics and the unrelenting pressure brought to bear on us confirm our suspicions that we are being frog-marched into internationally-binding arrangements that will eventually entail the total surrender of national sovereignty," he said.

In a scathing attack apparently directed at the United States, Malaysian

Prime Minister Mahathir Mohammad said one country was blatantly undermining the WTO by enacting extra-territorial laws to be submitted to by all nations and enterprises.

"We just cannot accept, and certainly cannot submit to such unilateral measures of coercion. We should take a firm position in containing these measures which arrogantly disregard the accepted norms and principles of international trade and investment relations," he said.

Malaysia's state oil com-

pany Petronas, faces U.S. sanctions for investing in Iran. It has a 30 per cent stake in Iran's \$600 million Sirri oilfields exploration project which puts it over the \$40 million a year level the U.S. has said non-U.S. companies can invest in Iran and Libya's oil and gas sectors.

Malaysia has vowed to challenge the U.S. threat.

On Sunday, Dr. Mahathir said: "Developing countries must reject this challenge to their sovereign right to be free to trade and invest wherever they wish and

which also threatens the expansion of trade and development globally."

He said social clauses being promoted by the West to govern international trade were aimed at negating the advantage of cheap labour costs developing countries had over them.

Dr. Mahathir said globalisation of trade was being used to disadvantage developing countries which he said were expected to adopt policies and criteria unilaterally determined by the West.

FOR SALE OR RENT, VILLA IN ABDOUN

A FOUR STOREY SEMI-DETACHED VILLA ON THE HIGHEST LOCATION IN ABDOUN. CAN BE USED AS A RESIDENTIAL COMPLEX, CONSISTS OF THE FOLLOWING:

1-BASEMENT FLOOR: GARAGES FOR SIX CARS, STORAGE ROOM, SERVICES AND A SMALL ONE BEDROOM FLAT.

2-GROUND FLOOR: TWO MASTER BEDROOMS, OFFICE, GUEST AND DINING ROOMS, KITCHEN AND SITTING ROOM.

3-FIRST FLOOR: THREE BEDROOMS, SITTING ROOM AND KITCHEN.

4-SECOND FLOOR: ONE BEDROOM FLAT.

MATERIALS USED ARE OF SUPER QUALITY WITH ELECTRIC SHUTTERS.

THREE REMOTE CONTROL GARAGE DOORS, CUPBOARD AND ELEVATOR IF WANTED.

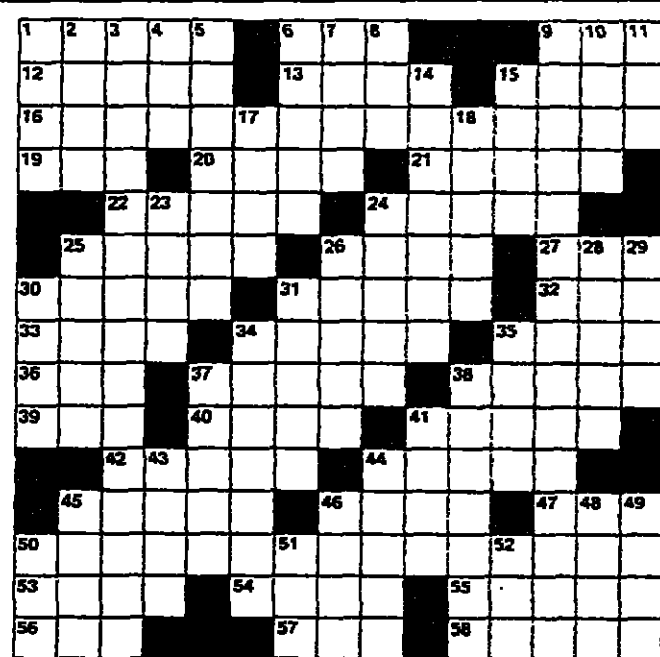
TELEPHONE SWITCHBOARD, WATER SOFTNER, TWO 100 m³ WATER RESERVOIRS.

EACH FLOOR CAN BE LET ON ITS OWN ON SITE INFORMATION AVAILABLE.

TEL 37070 ... MOBILE.

THE Daily Crossword

- ACROSS
- 1 Aboriginal Americans
 - 6 Kind of cry
 - 9 Exclude
 - 12 Spearlike weapon
 - 13 Wellaway!
 - 15 River in Italy
 - 16 Prime time fare
 - 19 Former boxing great
 - 20 Except
 - 21 Zones
 - 22 Part of New England
 - 24 Eccentric fellow
 - 25 Stripes
 - 26 Male of the red deer
 - 27 Obese
 - 30 Lusterless
 - 31 Garment for a rane
 - 32 Past
 - 33 Raw materials
 - 34 Used skulls
 - 35 Ruler
 - 36 Brewed beverage
 - 37 He was Gump
 - 38 Loco
 - 39 Sixth sense: abbr.
 - 40 Rara —
 - 41 As a consequence
 - 42 Alarm
 - 44 Sheriff's star
 - 45 Baseball great
 - 46 Dubliner's land
 - 47 Estuary
 - 50 One-party ballots
 - 53 Command for a canine
 - 54 Gratify
 - 55 Great odist
 - 56 Moray
 - 57 Mal de —
 - 58 Drawing room



by James Barrick

SLAP SNAP KAPPA
LANA TOBE ARRI
ORAL OIMAR RIOTS
TEMPERATURE VIAT
SEAMEN INFO
THIS MISSTILES
CABER LAME GONE
ASU SHAVERS NOW
METH EMIT WIELD
PATIELLAIS TON
EMIL OERMAS
ERR CONCORDANCE
MICAH OOOZE TORO
MOUSE EXED EDEN
ASPIEN LENO SEES

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- DOWN
- 1 "Lohengrin" name
 - 2 Speak with rage
 - 3 Linger
 - 4 Old European coin
 - 5 Vacation locale
 - 6 Relinquish
 - 7 Succulent plant
 - 8 Operated
 - 9 Bacon-and-eggs alternative
 - 10 Connectives
 - 11 "Rob —"
 - 12 Marked, in a way
 - 13 Word of agreement
 - 14 Makes into leather
 - 15 Speechify
 - 16 Tiny colonists
 - 17 Concerns
 - 18 Makes public
 - 19 Warmongers
 - 20 Size of type
 - 21 Conservative, politically
 - 22 Airborne speck
 - 23 — boom
 - 24 Lunatic's utterances
 - 25 Sharp taste
 - 26 Asian capital
 - 27 Adorns
 - 28 Mala —
 - 29 Salt sea in Asia
 - 30 Noah's son
 - 31 To — (precisely)
 - 32 Diminutive suffix
 - 33 "Tell — the man"
 - 34 Org.
 - 35 A pronoun
 - 36 Noah's son
 - 37 Parrot

Jordan Times
Tel :
684311/699634

Peanuts



Andy Capp



Mutt'n'Jeff



REUTERS REUTERS

The Business of Information

Major Currencies & Cross Rates									
Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY	CAD	ITL	NLG	FRF
US Dollar	1.5135	0.5118	1.2865	113.13	1.3331	1520.60	1.6970	5.1155	
DE Mark	0.6807		0.4039	0.4387	74.75	0.8805	1004.36	1.1212	3.3798
GB Sterling	1.8345			2.0789	185.30	2.1790	2465.42	2.7737	8.3613
CH Franc	0.7896	119.46	0.4826		89.32	1.0522	1200.16	133.70	4.0375
JP Yen	0.0088	1.3367	0.5400	1.1185		1.1773	15.43	149.87	4.5178
CA Dollar	0.7501	1.1331	0.4571	0.9491	1.18		1136.00	1.2707	3.8278
IT Lira	0.0007	0.9947	0.4018	0.0832	1346.71	0.2761		11.15	3.3619
NL Guilder	0.5892	59.16	0.3602	74.62	66.83	0.7853	895.79		3.0135
FR Franc	0.1955	0.2958	0.1195	24.7484	22.10	0.2605	33.16	33.1600	

Energy		
Oil	Last	Previous
Brent	22.60	22.80
W. Texas	22.95	23.20
Bony	22.60	22.80
Dubai	20.73	21.84
UL Gas	222.00	222.00

Metal Prices		
Metal	Bid	Offer
Gold (oz's)	378	378.5
Silver (oz's)	4.79	4.81
Platinum (oz's)	380.5	381.5
AL (3 Months)	1423	1426
CU (3 Months)	1967	1972
Zinc (3 Months)	1073	1078

Energy		
Commodity	Last	Delivery
Coffee (cibis)	120.92	Spot
Cocoa (Siton)	1363	Spot
Sugar (Siton)	315.5	Spot
Wheat (Siton)	153	Spot
Soya (cibis)	21.53	Spot
Tea (cibis)	717	Spot
Barley (Siton)	2.11	Spot
Rice (Siton)	470	Spot

Mid-East Currencies					
Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY
SA Riyal	0.2666	0.4037	0.16313	0.33784	30.1923
AE Dirham	0.2724	0.41242	0.16668	0.34514	30.8442
KW Dinar	3.3431	5.06073	2.04541	4.23549	378.501
BR Dinar	0.3770	4.91606	1.62285	3.36134	300.391
CV Pound	2.163	3.2737	1.3225	2.7394	244.7

Currency Deposit Rates (Bil)					
Period	-1-	-3-	-6-	-9-	-12-
Currency	Month	Months	Months	Months	Year
USD	5.25	5.37	5.43	5.50	5.59
GBP	5.88	5.99	6.10	6.27	6.45
JPY	0.40	0.35	0.38	0.56	0.48
DEM	3.00	3.07	3.13	3.06	3.24
FRF	3.31	3.35	3.32	3.18	3.25

JOD Cross Rates		
Currency	Buy	Sell
US Dollar	0.708	0.710
GB Sterling	1.1562	1.1621
DE Mark	0.4672	0.4695
CH Franc	0.5583	0.5611
FR Franc	0.1382	0.1389
JP Yen	0.025	0.0281
NL Guilder	0.4167	0.4188
IT Lira	0.465	0.4673

* Source: Central Bank of Jordan.

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

A leading Jordanian financial institution is seeking the employment of Information System Personnel in its Automation Department:

- One Computer Communication Engineer holding a B. Eng. in Communication, Electrical, or Computer Engineering and having a working experience in the following areas:
 - The usage of PC's in financial institution and the implementation of Office Automation Packages such as Microsoft Excel, Microsoft Word.
 - The follow-up of the maintenance done on the PC's in use.
 - The usage and implementation of Microsoft Windows NT 3.51 & 4.0.
 - The implementation of Ms Exchange E-mail package, Internet and Intranet.
 - Network Management and TCP/IP network configuration.
 - Knowledge of UNIX is a plus.
- One Software Engineer holding a B. Eng., BA or BSc in Computer Science, Computer Technology, or Software Engineering and having a working experience in the following areas:
 - The usage of PC's in financial institution and implementation of Office Automation Packages such as Microsoft Excel and Microsoft Word.
 - Microsoft Windows 3.11 and Windows 95.
 - Development under Sybase RDBMS and Power Builder Environment.
 - UNIX Operating System.
 - Knowledge of implementing an Archiving and Imaging systems is a plus.

In addition to the above, the applicant is expected to be a graduate of a reputable university with a good G.P.A. and has 2 to 4 years of experience. He/she should be ready to work on special automation projects as they might develop. Please forward resume to:

Please forward resume to:
The Automation Department,
P.O. Box 950287,
11195 Amman-Jordan.

Resume should be received not later than 14/11/1996.

HOROSCOPE FORECAST FOR MONDAY, NOVEMBER 4, 1996

By Thomas S. Pierson,
Astrologer, Carroll
Richter Foundation

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) Study your practical affairs from the right perspective today and handle them efficiently. Get at the root of difficulties later this evening which is plaguing your loved ones and find out which you can do to help.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) Discuss with fellow associates who are available today, just how to improve your joint interests, then get out to a new place with one. Later this evening meet with a bigwig and determine your best course of action for a project.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) Analyse your career activities and gain views which you had never thought about before this today and you make big headway towards your success. This evening can be spent with your loved ones in some fun activities at home.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) Early today make good arrangements for the weekend and tonight be most affectionate with your mate. It will be a good time later this evening for you to gain harmony with your loved ones and close friends.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) If you investigate more today, you can handle the situation at home with your loved ones wisely. Do some entertaining this evening with close friends and fellow associates and you can have fun.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) Go to the right sources for the information you need today in order to make your daily career activities produce more and gain more benefit. Later this evening you will be able to meet with some knowledgeable person.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) Study your position in life carefully today and then you know how to take care of pluses and minuses and add to possessions. This evening will be good for going out on the town with your mate for some romance.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) You can handle personal affairs well during the daytime today and do very well, then be happy with your friends in some activities which everyone will enjoy and you will be able to relax for the weekend and the next few days.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) Study whatever has been bothering you today and you can be more objective and solve the matter well. Later this evening can be spent with some close friends and loved ones for some activities which will be enjoyed by all.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) Go to the right places today where you can obtain whatever you want the most and get them. Contact an expert later this evening who has the knowledge to be of assistance concerning some difficult career activities.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) This is the day today to handle some ticklish situation very carefully and get good results with it in the long run. Later this evening you can go out on the town with close friends and have a fun time and forget about everything.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) This is a good day today to labour on new aims and make big progress at this time. Gain more expertise and more understanding later this evening by consulting some knowledgeable person about a new project.

Birthstone of November: Topaz — Tiger's Eye.

European bank to extend loans to IDB and Greater Amman municipality

AMMAN (Petra) — Industrial Development Bank (IDB) Director General Rajab Sa'ad, a member of the Jordanian delegation to the Euro-Mediterranean partnership conference, Sunday said that the European Investment Bank (EIB) will offer the IDB 25-30 million European Currency Units from the beginning of 1997.

He added that the Jordanian delegation, which was headed by Ministry of Planning Secretary General Nabil Ammari, and the EIB agreed on holding further discussions after signing the agreement to provide help and assistance for the IDB.

Mr Sa'ad said the officials of the EIB reiterated their full support for IDB and expressed their willingness to participate in IDB's capital, extension of loans and grants for environmental issues, upgrading the existing industrial projects and launching new projects, particularly the small industries.

The Jordanian delegation to the conference stressed the need to finalise the mechanism and procedures before signing the partnership agreement with Europe by the end of this year.

The EIB — the European Union's long term financial institution, announced last week that it would extend nine million European Currency Units to Jordan for the restructuring and rehabilitation of the water distribution network in the Greater Amman Municipality areas of Hashmi, Marka and Sahab.

Greater Amman contains some 40 per cent of Jordan's population and suffers severe water shortages. The project will improve the availability and quality of the water supply and promote its more efficient use.

Government decides to sell more of its stake in the Jordan Cement Factories Company

By Amy Henderson
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The government will sell a higher percentage of its equity in the Jordan Cement Factories Company, a government official told the Jordan Times Sunday.

According to the official, the sale will be for 33 per cent of government-owned shares (or 18 million shares) in the company instead of the 20 per cent offered two months ago. The cement company has a capital of JD 60 million with a par value of JD1 per share

and a market value of JD 3.340 as of Nov. 3, 1996.

The official told the Jordan Times, without elaboration, that the decision to increase the number of for-sale shares was made after disappointing offers were provided last month by 16 international companies specialising in the cement industry.

In August, the government expressed its intent to sell 20 per cent of its stake to companies willing to sign a technical assistance and management agreement. The official said that the government may introduce

amendments to the terms of the tender requirements, but did not specify what these changes would be.

"We may announce the new terms by the end of the week, but the most substantial change will be in the number of shares on offer," he said.

In early September, the director-general of the Jordan Investment Corporation said the government was willing to sell its shares in exchange for securing a technical assistance agreement to upgrade the quality and competitiveness of the company's cement and

ensure a higher volume of sales to neighbouring countries, particularly the Palestinian self-rule territories (Jordan currently has an agreement with the Palestinian National Authority to export 400,000 tonnes of cement annually) as well as Syria and Israel.

The Jordan Cement Factories Company, which currently enjoys a concession agreement that expires in 2001, is likely to face increased competition in the region in coming years.

The PNA announced last month plans to establish a cement company in

the West Bank, which would somewhat end their dependence on imports from Egypt and Jordan. Additionally, a Swiss cement group, Holderbank, active in Egypt until 1961 when the Egyptian government nationalised the Egyptian Cement Company (ECC) will return to production in that country. The ECC announced only last weekend that Holderbank was adding \$14.1 million to the company's capital and is investing \$16.9 million in a new plant, under construction outside of Cairo.

Daily Beat

A review of news from the Arabic press

Interest on dinar loans may decline, bankers say

** THE INTEREST on loans denominated in Jordanian dinars may decline as some bankers expect the new monetary measures, set by the Central Bank, would lead to higher dinar liquidity in the market.

Tamim Rifai, employed by the Amman Bank for Investment as a branch manager, said that the pressure on borrowing in dinars would ease and that, by lending in foreign currencies, pressure on interest would also ease. He explained that interest on foreign currency loans is at present lower than the interest on dinar loans and that with higher liquidity of local currency, the interest rate on dinar credits may decline.

Mr Rifai expected the increase in liquidity and the decline in interest to lift the volume of trading and share prices at the Amman Financial Market (stock exchange). He saw the general effect of the new monetary regulations to be a consolidation of credibility in the Jordanian banking system and, as a result, a consolidation of the Kingdom's reserves.

Khalid Shahin, the executive president of the Shahin Investment Group, urged the banks to launch a wide-ranging campaign to help their clients understand the new instruments for investments. He also saw the possibility of "tranquillity of interest rates on the dinar."

Hani Saudi, a money-changer, praised the Central Bank moves especially the abolishment of "that traditional and imaginary barrier between resident and non-resident Jordanians." He said he was looking forward to the courageous step of cutting lending interest rates and paying interest on the mandatory reserves at the Central Bank in order to stop the Jordanian monetary authority from issuing certificates of deposits with high-interest yields.

Adnan Abul Nadi, a senior official at the Arab Jordan Investment Bank, said the new memorandum of the Central Bank on monetary reforms encourages lending in foreign currencies to export-oriented projects as such schemes will generate income in foreign currency without any risk of non-repayment of the loans. Mr Abul Nadi saw the activity on the stock market hinging on interest rate movement and the political climate noting also that the floatation of shares on the primary market plays an important role in the liquidity available to trade shares and stocks.

He calculated the impact of stopping the payment of interest on the mandatory reserves that banks are required to park at the Central Bank and concluded that banks will be paying less interest on foreign currency deposits of their clients. He said that if a one-month dollar deposit earns 4.25 per cent on world markets, the rate that Jordanian banks will be able to give would be approximately 4.5 per cent on a dollar deposit for one-month. As such, the gap between the interest on dinar and that on foreign currencies will widen, he added (AJ Rai).

THE BETTER HALF. By Glasbergen



JUMBLE. THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

CREYD
CEEJT
YIRCKT
ALEGEB

Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

Print answer here: HE

Yesterday's Jumble: HEAVY CHAIR BEWAIL PYTHON
Answer: What he found hard to understand at the opera — WHY HE WAS THERE

AMMAN FINANCIAL MARKET											
HOUSING BANK CENTRE AMMAN - JORDAN											
ORGANIZED MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR SUNDAY 03/11/1996											
PAST 12 MONTHS HIGH	PAST 12 MONTHS LOW	COMPANY'S NAME	P / E	DIV.	NO. OF SHARES	NO. OF SHARES TRADED	VALUE TRADED JD	OPEN PRICE	CLOSE PRICE	CHANGE	
252.000	205.000	ARAB BANK	13.5	1.42	32	1700	420685	247.00	247.00	-	
1.250	.880	MID.EAST INV.BK.	68.3	0.00	11	4250	4420	1.05	1.04	-.01	
2.700	2.120	INDUSTRIAL DEV.BK.	5.1	6.27	6	3516	7791	2.19	2.22	+.03	
5.550	4.250	ARAB TRADING CO.	12.9	2.87	3	368	368	4.80	5.60	+.80	
3.040	2.550	JOR.KUNAFIT BANK	18.8	0.00	9	544	1368	2.57	2.60	+.03	
1.200	.890	JOR.GULF BANK	5.4	7.78	6	8000	7200	.91	.90	-.01	
4.180	3.300	JOR.ROMANA BANK	17.9	0.00	10	5219	19427	3.71	3.72	+.01	
3.930	1.400	UNION BK.SAV.INV.	7	0.00	1	250	370	1.52	1.48	-.04	
3.800	3.000	JOR.INV.FIN.BANK	17.3	0.00	2	230	735	3.21	3.20	-.01	
1.630	1.000	PHILADEL.INV.BK.	9	0.00	2	300	390	1.31	1.30	-.01	
BANK SECTOR TOTALS			INDEX: 189.09	CHNG: +0.03	82	24094	462713				
2.910	1.900	JOR.FRENCH INSUR.	5.3	10.64	6	1200	2256	1.90	1.88	-.02	
INSURANCE SECTOR TOTALS			INDEX: 119.14	CHNG: -0.10	6	1200	2256				
1.900	1.450	JOR.ELECTRIC PHR.	11.0	7.59	14	4869	7692	1.58	1.51	-.07	
2.480	2.280	HIMEX MINERALS	12.0	5.71	2	1008	2470	2.48	2.4	-.08	
6.950	6.000	VEHIC. OWNERS FED.	10.9	5.69	1	179	1101	6.15	6.11	-.04	
2.800	2.090	SHIPPING LINE	10.7	7.87	1	1500	1810	2.54	2.54	0.00	
2.020	1.080	NATL. PORTFOLIO	9	0.00	20	5900	6857	1.18	1.17	-.01	
1.260	.590	JORDAN INTL. TRAD.	32.3	0.00	2	650	414	.64	.63	-.01	
3.660	3.130	ARAB INTL. INV. EDUC.	13.6	5.81	5	1000	3440	3.48	3.46	-.02	
2.430	1.700	UNIFIED CO.	9.1	5.81	5	850	1468	1.73	1.72	-.01	
SERVICE SECTOR TOTALS			INDEX: 110.96	CHNG: -0.30	52	15989	27400				
3.770	3.060	JOR. CEMENT FACT.	19.1	2.99	28	6063	20076	3.31	3.34	+.03	
3.550	2.710	JOR. PROSPECT MINES	32.8	0.00	3	796	2426	3.06	3.05	-.01	
5.960	4.780	ARAB POTASH	17.0	3.57	3	8400	52640	6.96	6.92	-.04	
10.550	8.720	JOR. PETROL. REFINERY	9.3	8.70	7	256	2355	9.20	9.08	-.12	
3.750	1.650	INDUSTRIAL COMM. AGR.	27.6	0.00	2	78	159	2.10	2.05	-.05	
8.150	6.420	JOR. ROASTED MILLS	8.9	3.61	1	100	693	6.96	6.92	-.04	
4.870	3.200	ARAB PHARM. MANF.	17.7	6.21	27	4552	14624	3.22	3.22	0.00	
2.600	2.050	JORDAN DAIRY	13.2	6.98	2	120	258	2.20	2.15	-.05	
8.000	4.250	DJR ALDAMA DV. INV.	12.5	4.39	2	70	316	4.80	4.56	-.24	
960	.960	LIVESTOCK INDUSTRY	9	0.00	2	2470	14640	.60	.59	-.01	
3.030	2.580	GENERAL INVESTMENT	7.7	4.72	2	228	725	3.03	3.18	+.15	
1.090	.580	NATIONAL INDS.	8.6	10.34	1	750	435	.59	.58	-.01	
1.840	.990	INTERMED. PETROL. CHEM.	9	0.00	13	3566	3479	1.00	.97	-.03	
3.550	2.280	UNIV. CHEM. INDS.	69.5	0.00	1	250	658	2.63	2.63	0.00	
1.350	.800	JOR. SULPHO-CHEM	9	0.00	2	500	400	.83	.80	-.03	
1.950	1.080	ARAB PHARM. CHEM.	23.0	0.00	7	1150	1423	1.26	1.23	-.03	
3.280	1.480	UNIV. WOOD INDS.	4.5	13.42	14	4750	1081	1.50	1.49	-.01	
2.100	1.340	JOR. INDS. RESOURCES	17.2	0.00	10	1600	2190	1.38	1.37	-.01	
1.580	.850	JOR. NEW CABLE CO.	26.4	0.00	12	7150	6435	.90	.90	0.00	
2.460	1.750	ST. SARA READY WEAR	7	0.00	3	1650	3026	1.84	1.84	0.00	
1.480	1.080	INTL. TOBACCO	25.4	0.00	8	1845	2004	1.09	1.08	-.01	
2.040	.990	UNION CH. & VEG.	24.4	0.00	3	250	249	1.00	.99	-.01	
INDUSTRIAL SECTOR TOTALS			INDEX: 110.63	CHNG: +0.06	176	69890	136351				
GRAND TOTAL			INDEX: 148.01	CHNG: +0.02	316	111173	628720				
PARALLEL MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR SUNDAY 03/11/1996											
790	.470	CENTRAL GEN. STORAGE	18.5	0.00	2	2150	991	.47	.46	-.01	
800	.570	ARAB TRADING CO.	14.9	0.00	7	3550	1991	.57	.56	-.01	
950	.440	NATL. COMMER. CENTERS	5	0.00	7	6350	3053	.48	.48	0.00	
930	.700	UNION INV. 507	68.9	0.00	10	12550	2761	.73	.72	-.01	
1.110	.670	ARAB FIN. INVEST.	9	0.00	16	11200	5268	.49	.47	-.02	
950	.770	AL-DAMIAN 757	9	0.00	14	31618	16862	.80	.77	-.03	
890	.510	ARAB FOOD & MED.	2	0.00	8	2350	1473	.62	.63	+.01	
1.760	1.350	NATL. CHLORINE	2	0.00	5	2650	3578	1.35	1.35	0.00	
700	.450	ARAB INTL. INV. TRD.	9	0.00	1	1000	450	.48	.48	0.00	
1.020	.520	NATL. TEXTILE	9	0.00	12	6350	3785	.60	.61	+.01	
1.100	.510	NATL. MULT. INV. MANICO	2	0.00	21	14595	7298	.51	.50	-.01	
1.080	.750	JORDAN STEEL	2	0.00	7	11550	8891	.77	.77	0.00	
780	.430	ARAB ELECT. INDS.	9	0.00	3	12750	6120	.48	.48	0.00	
850	.610	RAZI PHARM. 652	2	0.00	4	1500	382	.61	.60	-.01	
820	.430	INDS. ENG.	26.5	0.00	22	16000	6880	.43	.43	0.00	
1.410	.770	INDS. CERAMIC	2	0.00	3	2000	1620	.82	.81	-.01	
890	.610	NATL. POULTRY	2	0.00	2	150	93	.63	.61	-.02	
950	.810	ARAB INT. FOOD FACT.	56.9	0.00	5	680	548	.81	.81	0.00	
1.500	.530	MID.EAST COMPLEX	7.9	0.00	19	29250	19530	.67	.67	0.00	
GRAND TOTAL					169	168243	91571				

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Wihdat, Hussein meet in Jordan Cup semis today

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Four of the Kingdom's top soccer teams will be facing off in the semifinals of the second most important soccer competition — the Jordan Cup — starting Monday.

Al Wihdat play Al Hussein in Amman at 2:30 p.m. today while the other semifinal groups Al Ramtha and Al Ahli in Irbid Tuesday.

While the semifinals have brought together four of the top five Premier League teams, current league leaders and Cup titleholders Al Faisali will be missing their shot at another of the 1996 season's titles after being knocked out 2-1 by Al Ahli Saturday. Al Faisali had won the season-opening Cup Winners' Cup while Al Ramtha won the Federation

Shield. The fourth and most important of the season's competitions — the Premier League — resumes Nov. 26.

Al Faisali's loss to Al Ahli came amidst talk by club board officials that they would suspend the game in protest of a JD 500 fine by the Jordan Soccer Federation for unsportsmanlike conduct of fans during their match against Al Wihdat in the past week.

Twenty-four Premier League and first division teams took part in the knockout Jordan Cup competition. Al Wihdat reached the semifinals after overcoming Kufroum, Al Arabi and Al Yarmouk while semifinal opponents Al Hussein had to squeeze by Shabab Al Hussein after an opening 7-0 win over Al Awdah.

Al Ramtha got there by

beating Al Jazireh and Al Zarqa while Al Ahli had an easier path beating lowly Al Talbiah before their coveted win over nine-time competition record holders Al Faisali.

Competition record (runner up in brackets)

1980 — Faisali (Baqaa)
1981 — Faisali (Ramtha)
1982 — Wihdat (Ahli)
1983 — Faisali (Ramtha)
1984 — Jazireh (Ahli)
1985 — Wihdat (Faisali)
1986 — Arabi (Jazireh)
1987 — Faisali (Hussein)
1988 — Wihdat (Faisali)
1989 — Faisali (Ramtha)
1990 — Ramtha (Hussein)
1991 — Ramtha (Wihdat)
1992 — Faisali (Wihdat)
1993 — Faisali (Ramtha)
1994 — Faisali (Ramtha)
1995 — Faisali (Ramtha)

Cavaliers beat Bullets in OT; Barkely leads Rockets past Phoenix

LANDOVER, Maryland (R) — Terrell Brandon scored 31 points, including two free throws with 1.8 seconds left in overtime, to lift the Cleveland Cavaliers to a 98-96 win and spoil the home opener of the Washington Bullets Saturday.

With the score tied 96-96, Brandon took a pass on the left wing and drew a foul from Chris Webber. He sank both free throws and a final-second attempt by the Bullets missed.

"This is a confidence builder for us, being able to bounce back," Brandon said. "They knew I was getting the ball. I always try to get my shot. I want to be the man to win the game."

Washington's Rod Strickland converted a three-point play with 8.7 seconds left, tying the game at 96-96. A pair of free throws by Brandon had given the Cavaliers a 96-93 advantage.

Washington's Chris Whitney sent the game into overtime with a leading three-pointer from the top of the key with two

seconds left in regulation. Danny Ferry had sank a pair of free throws to put Cleveland ahead 90-87.

Rookie Vitaly Potapenko scored 22 points and Ferry added 12 for Cleveland (2-0), which has won twice on the road.

In Chicago, Michael Jordan scored 27 points as the Bulls celebrated their 1996 NBA championship by racing to a 24-point halftime lead and routing the Philadelphia 76ers 115-86.

Scottie Pippen added 22 and Ron Harper scored 17 of his 19 points in the first half for the Bulls (2-0), who received their championship rings from NBA Commissioner David Stern and hoisted their fourth title banner to the rafters of the United Centre.

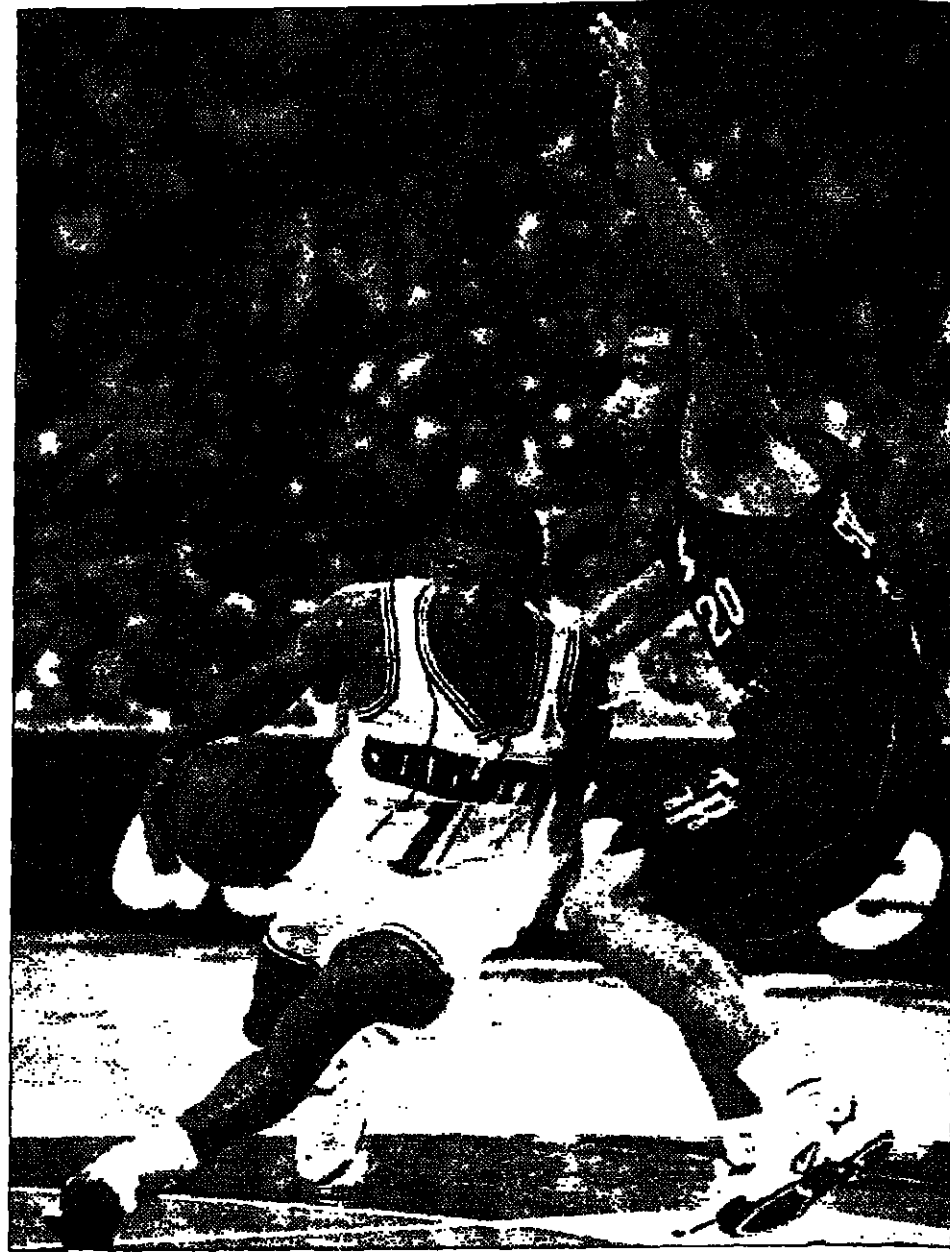
"Chicago is going to be considered one of the top teams ever in our existence," Stern said.

"It was nice to see some of the guys who hadn't won before go through this experience," Jordan said.

In Phoenix, Charles Barkley had a career-high 33 rebounds and 20 points in his return to his old stomping grounds as he powered the Houston Rockets to a 110-95 victory over the Suns.

Barkley played four seasons for Phoenix before forcing a trade to Houston this summer. Barkley, who was traded for four Rockets, got a mixed greeting from the crowd at America West Arena but it changed to mostly boos by the fourth quarter. He outrebounded his former team, which managed just 30 rebounds.

Hakeem Olajuwon scored 24 points, Clyde Drexler added 22, 10 assists and seven rebounds and rookie Matt Maloney scored 12 of his 17 in the first quarter, when the Rockets (2-0)



Charlotte Hornets' guard Muggsy Bogues (L) drives around Toronto Raptors' Damon Stoudamire during first half NBA action in the Charlotte Coliseum. Bogues played only six games last season due to injuries (Reuters photo)

NBA RESULTS

Detroit	90	Atlanta	78
Charlotte	109	Toronto	98
Miami	97	Indiana	95
Cleveland	98	Washington	96 (OT)
Chicago	115	Philadelphia	86
Sacramento	107	Dallas	94
Milwaukee	124	Boston	102
Houston	110	Phoenix	95
Seattle	104	Portland	93
Utah	95	LA Clippers	90

TENDER ANNOUNCEMENT The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan Telecommunications Regulatory Commission

The Telecommunications Regulatory Commission (TRC) of Jordan announces that it has released a Call for Tenders for a second national public paging licence. The new service operator will compete with the existing licensee, Jordan Radio Paging (JRP). Following consultation with the industry, the TRC issued the Call for Tenders dated November 4, 1996 (TRC Call 1996-1), which sets out the process that the TRC will follow in awarding the new licence. The process consists of two phases. During the first phase, a special tender evaluation committee will review the technical aspects of the submissions from all applicants. Those applicants who successfully pass this phase will participate in the second phase, in which their sealed financial proposals will be opened at a meeting of all qualifying applicants. The applicant offering the highest licence acquisition fee will be invited to sign a licence agreement to provide the paging service.

Parties interested in applying for the new paging licence may obtain a copy of the Call for Tenders from the TRC upon payment of JD 1500 before December 5, 1996. The deadline for the submission of applications is February 4, 1997. For a copy of TRC Call 1996-1, or for further information, contact: The Office of the Director General Telecommunications Regulatory Commission P.O. Box 850867, Amman 11185, Jordan Telephone (962) 6-866231 - Fax (962) 6-863641

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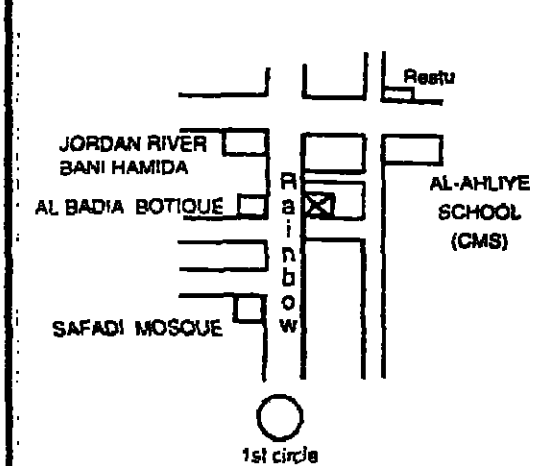
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Marathon m

Yevgeny... the world's... took another... his dream... Pete Sam... Sunday when... final of the... Paris Indoor

opened an 18-point lead. In Indianapolis, Alonzo Mourning had 27 points and eight rebounds to lead the Miami Heat to a 97-95 victory over the Indiana Pacers, their first win ever at Market Square Arena.

Tim Hardaway added 25 points for the heat (2-0), who had lost their first 14 games at Indiana. In Seattle, Shawn Kemp scored 24 points and Detlef Schrempf 23 as the SuperSonics raced to a 17-point halftime advantage and a 104-93 rout of the Portland Trail Blazers.

Seattle defeated Portland for the seventh time in eight home games. In Los Angeles, Karl Malone had 21 points and 12 rebounds and John Stockton made a driving layup with 30 seconds remaining as the Utah Jazz held off a furious fourth-quarter rally to spoil the Clippers' home opener with a 95-90 victory.

Bryon Russell added 16 points and Jeff Hornacek had 15 for Utah (2-0), which was coming off an impressive season-opening victory over Seattle on Friday.

In Atlanta, Grant Hill nearly recorded a triple-double with 22 points, 15 rebounds and nine assists as the Detroit Pistons defeated the Hawks 90-78.

In Charlotte, Dell Curry scored 20 of his career-high 38 points in the third quarter and new team member Anthony Mason had 18 points and 15 rebounds as the Hornets defeated the Toronto Raptors 109-98.

In Dallas, Mitch Richmond scored 24 points and Tyus Edney added a career-high 23 to lift the Sacramento Kings to a 107-94 romp over the Mavericks.

In Milwaukee, Johnny Newman and Glenn Robinson led the Bucks with 21 points apiece and Armon Gilliam added 17 and 12 rebounds as the Bucks broke on top early and never looked back in 124-102 rout of the Boston Celtics.

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Bahrain stays away from GCC meeting

DOHA (Agencies) — Bahrain on Sunday underscored its intention to boycott next month's Gulf Arab summit by refusing to attend a preparatory meeting in Qatar amid a territorial dispute between the countries, a Gulf official said.

Delegates from Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) attended the meeting which opened in the Qatari capital on Saturday, but Bahrain's seat remained empty, said the official who asked for anonymity.

Gulf news agencies said Qatar's emir, Sheikh Hamad Bin Khalifa Al Thani, sent envoys to Bahrain, Kuwait and the UAE.

Qatar and Bahrain are locked in a dispute over a number of barren islands, sandbanks and reefs which Bahrain has controlled since the 1930s. The areas may contain oil and gas reserves and are considered by both countries to be of strategic value.

Manama has not shown any public signs that it might reverse its threat to boycott the summit in protest against Qatar's failure to withdraw a case it has taken to the International Court of Justice over the dispute.

But some diplomats said they expected Manama to respond positively to mediation efforts by Gulf and Saudi officials. Saudi Arabia is the dominant power broker in the political, economic and military alliance.

"The impression here so far is that they will go," said one Manama-based Arab diplomat. "It will be a mistake not to go and take your case and present it to the meeting."

Qatar said it would only withdraw the case if Saudi mediation succeeded in settling the row.

Qatar's Finance, Economy and Trade Minister Sheikh Mohammad Ben Khalifa Al Thani left for Manama on Sunday to deliver an invitation to Bahrain's emir, Sheikh Isa Bin Salman Al Khalifa, to attend the December 7 summit, the news agencies said.

From there he will leave for Abu Dhabi, they said. Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Sheikh Mohammad Ben Khalifa Al Thani arrived in Kuwait and gave the invitation to the emir, Sheikh Jaber Al Ahmad Al Sabah, they added.



ISRAELI ALERT: Israeli police at a roadblock near Tel Aviv on Sunday check Palestinian workers for fear of a possible suicide attack by Palestinian militants of Islamic Jihad marking the one-year anniversary of Islamic Jihad leader Fathi Shaqaqi's assassination (Reuters photo)

Iran urges Bosnia not to succumb to U.S. pressure

TEHRAN (AFP) — Iranian Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Velayati urged Bosnia on Sunday not to cave in to U.S. pressure over conditions for a major arms delivery.

"We are sure there is nothing the Bosnians will compromise their dignity for. They will not allow others to impose their wishes on them," he told AFP.

"Relations between Iran and Bosnia are very deep and not even the United States can come in between them."

Washington has demanded the dismissal of "Iranian-linked" military officials in Bosnia, notably Muslim-Croat federation's Deputy Defence Minister Hasan Cengic, before it would go ahead with the delivery of a \$100 million arms shipment to Sarajevo.

State Department spokesman Nicholas Burns said the United States demanded Mr. Cengic's dismissal based on his "close personal ties" with the government of Iran, as well as his efforts

to block the development of a Muslim-Croat army.

Mirza Hajric, an aide to Bosnian President Alija Izetbegovic, indicated Saturday that the federation parliament would take a decision shortly on replacing Mr. Cengic, "taking into account the views of the American government."

The United States, which brokered the Dayton peace accord in former Yugoslavia, is worried about the influence of Muslim states in Bosnia — notably Iran with which Sarajevo built up ties during the war against the Serbs.

Washington has also demanded the expulsion from Bosnia of all the so-called mujahideen from Iran and other Muslim states who fought alongside the government forces during the war.

Mr. Velayati blasted Washington for its "irrational demands" on Bosnia "which are made from a haughty and at the same time weak position."

Sanaa hunts for kidnappers

SANAA (AFP) — Yemeni security forces have called for the surrender of tribesmen who held a French diplomat hostage for 12 days until they released him on Friday, a security official said Sunday.

Security forces maintained their watch on villages in the mountains of Ma'rib province, 180 kilometres east of here, where the kidnappers, of French embassy attaché Serge Lefevre, are holed up, he said.

The authorities have also refused to release dozens of Jihm tribesmen who were first arrested two weeks ago to force the kidnappers to free Mr. Lefevre, the official said.

The government accuses the kidnappers of "breaking the law and harming the reputation of Yemen," one of the world's poorest countries which is trying to earn more revenue from tourism.

Sharon says he will not attend MENA meeting; Egypt is unconcerned

TEL AVIV (Agencies) — Hardline Israeli Infrastructure Minister Ariel Sharon said Sunday he would boycott this month's Middle East and North Africa (MENA) economic conference in Cairo because of harsh Egyptian criticism of Israel.

"It is obvious I will not go to Cairo because of the extremely harsh attacks launched by the press and Egyptian leaders against Israel," Mr. Sharon told Israeli radio during a tour of Jewish settlements in the West Bank.

"It is not possible to act as if nothing has happened," said Mr. Sharon, adding that "economic relations could only develop through mutual respect."

Israel is sending a delegation to the conference headed by Commerce and Trade Minister Nathan Sharansky. "I believe in furthering relations with Arab states. I place great importance on that, but in my opinion in order to further economic relations and other bilateral relations there has to be a comfortable climate," Mr. Sharon told Israeli radio.

"The situation that exists today is that Egypt's newspapers and also its political leaders are attacking Israel in the most serious way and it seems to me it would be something completely incorrect that while Israel and its government are under such serious attacks to ignore it as if nothing is happening."

When asked whether a decision had been taken by his ministry to boycott the event, Mr. Sharon replied: "For now there is no other decision and I certainly will not go."

Mr. Sharon added: "I would be very happy to visit Egypt if there would be a fitting climate for it, if there would be relations of mutual respect. A people that wants to exist has to understand that without insisting on guarding its international honour it is impossible."

The Cairo meeting is the third annual regional development conference since Israel began peace negotiations with Palestinians, Syria, Jordan and Lebanon in 1991.

Today Israel has an interim peace deal with the Palestinians and a peace treaty with Jordan. Egypt was the first Arab state to make peace with Israel, in 1979.

The conferences were originally aimed at integrating Israel into the region's economy. But a faltering peace process since the May election of right-wing Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has placed unexpected hurdles before the Cairo gathering.

Many say Israel could find itself ignored by Arab businessmen at the Nov. 12-14 meeting of 85 states.

Egypt at one point showed signs of cold feet about holding the conference, saying it would be pointless unless Israel made a serious effort to carry out peace accords.

The national infrastructure ministry was created in June by Mr. Netanyahu who wanted to entice Mr. Sharon into government with a wide-ranging portfolio without giving the hawkish hardliner the key security ministries he had been seeking.

The infrastructure portfolio has control over the gas, electricity and water sectors which were to have been at the centre of regional economic cooperation efforts launched by the former Labour government of Yitzhak Rabin and Shimon Peres.

Egypt said it was unconcerned by Mr. Sharon's boycott of the Nov. 12-14 conference, saying no personal invitation was sent to Mr. Sharon.

"An invitation was extended by Egyptian Foreign Minister Amr Musa to Foreign Minister David Levy for Israel to be represented at ministerial level," said Ahmad Abul Kheir, deputy coordinator of the conference.

"That means they can choose their own representation," he told AFP, adding that Mr. Sharon's decision to boycott the conference "is the business of the Israeli government, not ours."

The multilateral economic discussions were launched in Casablanca, Morocco, in November 1994 and a second conference was held Amman in 1995. Both meetings were attended by Mr. Rabin and several of his senior ministers.

Mr. Netanyahu is not expected to attend this month's meeting in Cairo.

The Egyptian government and press have repeatedly criticised Mr. Netanyahu's right-wing government for freezing the peace process by blocking implementation of the 1995 Oslo accords on extending Palestinian self-rule, notably to the West Bank city of Hebron.

The attacks have also concerned the suspension of Israeli-Syrian peace talks due to Mr. Netanyahu's refusal to accept an informal agreement in principle from his Labour predecessors to return the Golan Heights to Damascus in exchange for peace.

Israel has issued several formal protests in recent weeks over violent anti-Israeli attacks in the official and private Egyptian press, including some comparing Mr. Netanyahu to Hitler.

Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak had threatened to postpone this month's conference unless there was progress in the peace process.

Employees' jobs, rights secured in privatisation process, Kabariti says

AMMAN (J.T.) — Prime Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti on Sunday assured all employees of government-owned commercial entities they would retain their jobs and rights regardless of the privatisation of the entities.

Mr. Kabariti, chairing a meeting of the Higher Committee for Privatisation, also said the privatisation process should be transparent and that the public should be informed of all decisions taken in the course of privatising state-owned entities so as to ensure the soundness and legality of the decisions.

Among the firms slated for privatisation are the National Electric Power Company, the National Telecommunications Company, the Public Transport Company and Royal Jordanian. The electricity and telecommunications company have already been registered as commercial entities governed by the Companies Law and operating on a strict commercial basis rather than semi-autonomous government-controlled institutions.

During Sunday's meeting the Higher Committee on Privatisation defined the general principles governing the process of privatisation, which is designed to

help achieve socio-economic reforms within the framework of the national programme drawn up to achieve this goal, said a statement carried by the Jordan News Agency, Petra.

It said the committee endorsed the principles and objectives of the privatisation process, which entails expanding the role of the private sector and freeing it from government interference. The government will only retain the role of a planning and regulatory authority.

Privatisation also aims at securing more investments at the national level in a manner that would secure the participation of the largest possible sectors of society and bringing modern technology to Jordan, the statement said.

At the meeting Minister of Post and Communications Jamal Saraihi presented a briefing on the progress in the privatisation of the national telecommunications firm and measures and mechanism taken to attract a strategic partner to the entity.

Officials have stressed that the privatisation process does not simply mean raising funds through disposing of government equity in state-owned firms but it mainly entails opening up the related spheres to the private sector.

U.N. officials leave after checking Iraq oil facilities

BAGHDAD (AFP) — Three U.N. experts have left Baghdad after holding talks with Iraqi officials and inspecting oil terminals and a long-delayed oil-for-food deal, U.N. sources said Sunday.

The experts who left Saturday examined containers at pumping stations at the Mina Al Bakr off-shore terminal in the Gulf and another one near the Turkish border, the U.N. sources said.

Three U.N. observers visited Iraq in September to study procedures for monitoring the quantity and quality of oil Iraq would export from Mina Al Bakr and through a trans-Turkish pipeline to the Mediterranean Port of Ceyhan.

But their visit coincided with an Iraqi military incursion into northern Kurdish safe areas, which provoked U.S. missile strikes and caused the United Nations to suspend the deal's application.

Under the deal signed in May, Iraq can export \$2 billion of oil over six months to pay for food and medicine as well as defray U.N.

costs and contribute to a war reparations fund stemming from its 1990 invasion of Kuwait.

The deal calls for strict monitoring. Iraq's delegate to the United Nations, Nizar Hamud, said last week that the main obstacle to the deal's implementation was setting the price of oil, but Washington has not given an answer yet.

The U.N. secretary general's office has been caught in the middle between Iraq and the United States since the oil-for-food deal was signed.

Before the deal is implemented, monitors must be deployed in Iraq to ensure fair distribution of the aid and both sides must resolve many financial and administrative problems.

U.N. sources said the administration of U.S. President Bill Clinton had told the U.N. secretary general's office that it was opposed to implementing the oil-for-food agreement before the U.S. presidential elections on Tuesday.

Algeria's GIA says states offered it cash and arms

PARIS (R) — Algeria's radical armed Islamic Group (GIA), locked in a five-year-old conflict with the Algerian government, said foreign governments offered to supply it with money and weapons, an Arab paper said on Sunday.

GIA Chief Antar Al Zouabri was quoted by the London-based Arabic language Al Hayat newspaper as saying the GIA had broken its links with radical fundamentalist groups in Egypt and Libya because of ideological divergencies.

He termed Libyan militants as being only "fundamentalists on paper."

"You have to know that the Armed Islamic Group has been offered material support, and not only moral support, from some regimes, which offered to supply it with weapons, ammunition, equipment and money," said Mr. Al Zouabri quoted by Al Hayat.

He did not identify these governments but said his group had rebuffed the offers.

The GIA, a ruthless organisation fighting to

establish a purist fundamentalist state in the north of Algeria, is blamed for killing civilians, including female activists, writers, journalists and religious workers.

It is also blamed for taking Algerian civil strife into French streets where eight people were killed and around 170 injured by bombs between July and October last year in Paris and the central city of Lyon.

Mr. Al Zouabri, dismissing the tide of outrage in Algeria following the killing of non-combatant civilians, said "there are many religious proofs which make legitimate (our) bombing operations even when there are civilian victims."

He made clear there had been cooperation between Egypt's jihad (holy war) and Libya's combatant armed group and the GIA but it ended because of ideological in-fighting.



Lighthouse wonder found in Egypt

LONDON (R) —

Underwater archaeologists believe they have found the remains of one of the seven wonders of the ancient world — the Pharos lighthouse off the Port of Alexandria. A British newspaper reported. They may also have found the Palace of Cleopatra, her tomb and the tomb of Alexander the Great, the Sunday Times reported. It said the Egyptian government used a team of divers from Britain and France to find the lighthouse and was flying in 200 experts from around the world to view the evidence. "This discovery is quite revolutionary. It will allow us to rewrite in detail the last days of the pharaohs," it quoted Aziza Said, a professor of Greco-Roman archaeology at Alexandria University, as saying. The lighthouse, reputedly equipped with a giant mirror to reflect light and guide ships, collapsed into the harbour during an earthquake 600 years ago.

Acid attack on actress who rejected marriage

LAHORE (AFP) — A leading Pakistani movie star Andleeb, had acid flung in her face in an attack after refusing to marry, family sources said here Sunday. The attack came in Sialkot near Lahore, the country's film capital. The 26-year-old actress, who had part of her face burned, has been admitted to a specialised clinic here, the sources said. The attackers stopped her car as she was driving home, threw acid on her face and disappeared, the sources said, adding there were fears that Andleeb might be permanently disfigured. The sources said a wealthy man enraged by her refusal to marry him was involved and that they believed he had already left the country. The actress made her mark as a heroine in the film world after starting her career in television. She had been working on 15 films. Pakistan's Film Industry Association immediately condemned the attack.

Andleeb, who has been in the film world since 1970, was married to a man who was a member of the Pakistani intelligence service. She was accused of being involved in a plot to assassinate a senior government official. She was later acquitted.

Andleeb's father, a prominent businessman, was also involved in the case. He was accused of providing financial support for the plot. He was later acquitted.

Andleeb's mother, who was also a prominent figure in the film industry, was also involved in the case. She was accused of providing financial support for the plot. She was later acquitted.

Andleeb's father-in-law, who was also a prominent figure in the film industry, was also involved in the case. He was accused of providing financial support for the plot. He was later acquitted.

Man ends 50-hour joke marathon

BOGOTA (R) — Most people can tell a joke or two, but a Colombian man set a personal record on Saturday after telling about 12,000 jokes on live radio during a gruelling 50-hour marathon. Comedian Jose Ordonez, who completed the feat on Colombia's Caracol network on Saturday evening, said he did it to raise money for the tens of thousands of people made homeless by the country's guerrilla war and seemingly never-ending spiral of violence. In an interview early on Saturday, during one of his hourly three-minute breaks from the joke marathon, the 28-year-old Ordonez quipped that he had also performed more than two days' worth of one-liners with a view to his waistline, since he lost about five kilos in the process. None of what Caracol itself billed as about 12,000 jokes were repeated during Ordonez's 50-hour performance beginning at 5 p.m. Thursday, but he used a computer in the radio station's Bogota headquarters to provide him with punchlines when he was feeling especially punchy.

Ordonez, who hosts his own TV show, said he plans to set a world record in the near future by telling a full 100 hours of jokes on live radio.

Ordonez's marathon was part of a series of events organized by the Caracol network to raise money for victims of the conflict. The network has been a major force in the country's media landscape.

Ordonez's performance was a testament to his resilience and sense of humor. He has become a popular figure in Colombia, known for his witty remarks and ability to connect with his audience.

Ordonez's marathon was a success, raising significant funds for the victims of the conflict. It also demonstrated the power of humor in the face of adversity.

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